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ABSTRACT

An 18-month study of the attitudes and values of today's college women regarding sexuality, dating, courtship, and marriage, involving in-depth interviews with a diverse group of 62 college women on 11 campuses, supplemented by 20-minute telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,000 college women yielded several major findings. Marriage appears to be a life goal for the majority of these women, and most would like to meet a spouse while at college. However, there are important aspects of the college social scene that appear to undermine the likelihood of achieving the goal of a successful future marriage. For example, since 1980, women have outnumbered men attending college. Relationships between college men and women today are often characterized by either too little commitment or too much, leaving women with few opportunities to explore the marriage worthiness of a variety of men before settling into a long-term commitment. "Hooking up," a distinctive sex-without-commitment interaction, is widespread on campuses and profoundly influences campus culture even though a minority of students engage in this practice. The term "hooking up" is ambiguous, and could mean anything from kissing to sex. "Dating" has multiple meanings for college women today, ranging from being in an exclusive relationship to casual friendship. College women find it difficult to know when college men consider themselves in a committed relationship. There are few widely recognized social norms on college campuses that define courtship, and social expectations, adult involvement, and guidance about relationships are lacking for most college students. Some recommendations are made to support the creation of socially prescribed rules and norms to guide young people toward marriage. Four appendixes discuss the methodology, list the members of the research team, contain the interview guide, and present the national survey questionnaire. (Contains 3 figures and 14 endnotes.) (SLD)

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Hooking Up, Hanging Out, and Hoping for Mr. Right

College Women on Dating and Mating Today

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An Institute for American Values Report to the Independent Women's Forum

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This report is based on original research conducted by the Institute for American Values' 16-member Courtship Research Team, led by Norval Glenn, professor of sociology at the University of Texas, and Elizabeth Marquardt, an affiliate scholar at the Institute. Professor Glenn also served as the project's research director. The members of the Courtship Research Team are listed in Appendix B.

This report was commissioned and funded by the Independent Women's Forum. To ensure the autonomy of the scholarly process, the Independent Women's Forum did not involve itself in researching and writing this report, and the report's findings and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Independent Women's Forum.

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Hooking Up, Hanging Out, and Hoping for Mr. Right
College Women on Dating and Mating Today

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 4

Introduction 8

1. Hooking Up 13

2. Joined at the Hip or Hanging Out, and Little In Between 24

3. When Courtship Disappears 30

4. Marriage 42

5. Children of Divorce: High Hopes and Few Models 50

6. Should 'Grown Ups' Care About the Mating of the Young? 59

7. Recommendations 68

Endnotes 69

Appendices

A. Methodology 70
B. Courtship Research Team 75
C. In-depth Interview Guide 76
D. National Survey Questionnaire 79

Executive Summary

AN 18-MONTH STUDY of the attitudes and values of today's college women regarding sexuality, dating, courtship, and marriage — involving in-depth interviews with a diverse group of 62 college women on 11 campuses, supplemented by 20-minute telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,000 college women — yields the following major findings.

1. Marriage is a major life goal for the majority of today's college women, and most would like to meet a spouse while at college. Eighty-three percent of respondents in the national survey agreed that "Being married is a very important goal for me," and 63 percent agreed that "I would like to meet my future husband in college." Contrary to what we might think, today's college women have high marital aspirations and many are actively thinking about marriage.

2. But there are important aspects of the college social scene that appear to undermine the likelihood of achieving the goal of a successful future marriage. For example, since 1980, women have outnumbered men attending college. In 1997, the sex ratio on-campuses nationally was only 79 men for every 100 women.

3. In addition, relationships between college women and men today are often characterized by either too little commitment or too much, leaving women with few opportunities to explore the marriage worthiness of a variety of men before settling into a long-term commitment with one of them.

4. "Hooking up," a distinctive sex-without-commitment interaction between college women and men, is widespread on-campuses and profoundly influences campus culture, although a minority of students engage in it. Three-fourths of respondents agreed that a "hook up" is "when a girl and a guy get together for a physical encounter and don't necessarily expect anything further." A "physical encounter" can mean anything from kissing to having sex. In the national survey, 40 percent of women said they had experienced a hook up, and one in ten reported having done so more than six times. Women who had hooked up reported a

range of feelings, positive and negative, about the practice. For example, 61 percent of college women who said that a hook up made them feel "desirable" also reported that it made them feel "awkward." Hooking up commonly takes place when both participants are drinking or drunk.

5. To say "we hooked up" could mean a couple kissed, or had sex, or had oral sex, but no one will know for sure. Indeed, it appears that the ambiguity of the phrase "hooking up" is part of the reason for its popularity. Although premarital sex is much more acceptable now than in the past, women are still wary of getting a bad reputation. Saying "we hooked up" allows women to be vague about the nature of the physical encounter while stating that it happened.

6. "Dating" carries multiple meanings for today's college women. We found four widely used and different meanings for the term, two of which were more common. A college couple who is "dating" is sometimes in a fast-moving, highly committed relationship that includes sexual activity, sleeping at one another's dorm most nights, studying together, sharing meals, and more, but rarely going out on "dates." These fast-moving commitments and hooking up operate as two sides of the same coin. At the same time, "dating" is also often synonymous with "hanging out," in which women and men spend loosely organized, undefined time together, without making their interest in one another explicit, unless they hook up, at which point dating and hooking up become the same thing.

7. College women say it is rare for college men to ask them on dates, or to acknowledge when they have become a couple. Only 50 percent of college women seniors reported having been asked on six or more dates by men since coming to college, and a third of women surveyed said they had been asked on two dates or fewer. Young women and men more often "hang out" rather than go on planned dates, and if they live in a coed dorm, their dorm is where they most often meet members of the opposite sex. They report that because they can hang out or hook up with a guy over a period of time and still not know if they are a couple, women often initiate "the talk" in which they ask, "Are we committed or not?" When she asks, he decides.

8. College women from divorced families differ significantly from women who grew up in intact families regarding marriage aspirations, getting advice from parents, and hooking up. Women from divorced families appeared more eager to marry, and wanted to marry sooner, but were less likely to believe that their future marriages would last. They were also less likely to report that they were raised with firm expectations about relationships with men, and less likely to report that their parents had told them to save sex for marriage. They were more likely to have hooked up, and if they did hook up, were more likely to have done so often — of women who had hooked up at least once, 37 percent of college women whose parents had divorced reported hooking up more than six times, compared with 23 percent of women from intact families.

9. There are few widely recognized social norms on college campuses that help guide and support young women in thinking about sex, love, commitment, and marriage. College women say they want to be married someday, and many would like to meet a future husband at college. Yet it seems that virtually no one even attempts to help them consider how their present social experience might or might not lead to a successful marriage, or how marriage might fit with other life goals.

10. As a result, the culture of courtship, a set of social norms and expectations that once helped young people find the pathway to marriage, has largely become a hook up culture with almost no shared norms or expectations. Hooking up, hanging out, and fast-moving ("joined at the hip") commitments are logical, though we believe seriously flawed, responses to this disappearance of a culture of courtship. The options available to college women are obviously strongly influenced by choices that other young men and women make, but each young woman today tends to see her choices as wholly private and individual. For example, while most college women expect to marry for life and 88 percent would not personally consider having a child outside of marriage, 87 percent agree that "I should not judge anyone's sexual conduct except my own." Consequently, when women are hurt or disappointed by the hook up culture, they typically blame themselves.

11. The lack of adult involvement, guidance, and even knowledge regarding how young people are dating and mating today is unprecedented and problematic. Parents, college administrators, and other social

leaders have largely stepped away from the task of guiding young people into intimate relationships and marriage. Few older adults are aware of what hooking up or dating means for college students today, and the institutional arrangements of space on many campuses, such as coed dorms, clearly help to facilitate the hook up culture.

Based on these findings, we offer the following recommendations.

1. Recognize that older adults, including parents, college administrators, and other social leaders, should have important roles in guiding the courting and mating practices of the young. The virtual disappearance of adult participation in, or even awareness of, how today's young people find and marry one another should be seen as a major social problem, and should end.

2. Recognize that college women typically do not yearn for a series of "close relationships," but instead the majority seek long-term commitment and marriage.

3. There appears to have been a reduction in male initiative in dating on college campuses. Recognize that the burden of dating and mating should not fall on women alone, and that there is a need for greater male initiative.

4. Support the creation of socially prescribed rules and norms that are relevant to and appropriate for this generation, and that can guide young people with much more sensitivity and support toward the marriages they seek. When it comes to inherently social acts such as romance and marriage, social rules do more than restrict individual choice, they also facilitate it. The absence of appropriately updated social norms, rituals, and relationship milestones leaves many young women confused, and often disempowered, in their relationships with men. Socially defined courtship is an important pathway to more successful marriages. □

Introduction

ALL OF US are fascinated by how young people meet and mate, and as a society we are particularly interested in how college students — the next generation of social leaders — make these decisions. Each generation of young people comes up with its own, seemingly impenetrable vocabulary to describe their experiences, and outside observers are eager to learn the meaning behind these terms. This report should satisfy those within and outside of the academy who want to know something about what college women today are doing, thinking, and feeling regarding sexuality, dating, courtship, and marriage.

At the same time, there is a growing discussion in the U.S. about marriage and its benefits for children and society. Numerous scholars are conducting research that investigates how marriages succeed and how troubled marriages can be improved. Yet comparatively little research examines how young people meet, mate, and decide to marry in the first place. As scholars, and as society, we seem to have little awareness that good marriages depend not just on the wisdom of the two young people making the choices, but also on institutional arrangements and social norms that are beyond the control of these individuals.

In the past, social processes that guided young people toward marriage had a name: courtship. Yet, just as the term courtship itself has faded away and has come to seem old-fashioned, the complex social networks that the term described appear also to have faded away, leaving some scholars to wonder whether any comparable institutions have risen to replace them.

Among the scholars who have argued for the importance of socially defined mating processes is Leon Kass, who has chronicled and lamented the demise of courtship.[1] Although few are likely to challenge Kass' contention that there has been a decline in the "wooing" of young women by young men, all while under the supervision of parents and other older adults, more debatable is Kass' argument that courtship has not been replaced by any effective institutionalized mating norms, or at least not by ones guided by older adults. Do vestiges of traditional courtship still exist? More broadly, are young women today left to find the pathway to marriage completely on their own, or are there any social processes at work that help (or harm) them if they wish to achieve a happy marriage?

This study seeks to examine the dating and courtship attitudes and values of contemporary college women, focusing on unmarried, heterosexual women enrolled as undergraduates in four-year colleges and universities in the United States. To examine this question, a team of researchers fielded a structured telephone survey of 1,000 undergraduate, unmarried, heterosexual college women from around the country. In addition, prior to the telephone survey and with an eye toward designing it, members of the research team visited 11 different college and university campuses and conducted detailed, in-person interviews with 62 women attending some

of the more elite institutions of higher education in the nation (see Appendix A for details). This study focuses on college women in part because they are at the leading edge of society — they are many of tomorrow's professionals, business leaders, and government officials — and they will have a disproportionate influence on their peers and on the next generation of young people. In addition, another recent report has focused on the heterosexual relationships and marital aspirations of young American adults who are not enrolled in college, arguably leaving college students the segment of young adults whose mating practices are least understood.[2] Although in this study we concentrate on the experiences of college women, future research should also be conducted on the mating and dating perspectives of college men.

Since none of the 62 women interviewed in the qualitative portion of the study were enrolled in church-related institutions or in nonelite state-supported colleges, it is not surprising that these women were, on average, less religious than the women in the national sample and less traditional in some of their attitudes (see the comparisons in Appendix A, Table 2). The largest and probably most important difference is that 78 percent of the national sample but only 37 percent of the qualitative study subjects "strongly agreed" with the statement, "I have a clear sense of what I should do in my romantic/sexual interactions"— an indication of greater confusion among women in the latter group. Surprisingly, the proportion agreeing that "Being married is a very important goal to me" was somewhat lower in the national sample (83 versus 91 percent), but the national sample respondents were more likely than the qualitative study subjects to say they would like to meet their future husbands in college (63 versus 50 percent).

Given the differences between the two samples, the results of the qualitative interviews should be interpreted with caution, but it seems likely that the kinds of attitudes, feelings, and experiences prevalent among the qualitative subjects are common at least among the women enrolled in the kinds of elite institutions at which these subjects were enrolled. Further, the on-campus interviews, because they go into much more depth, can reveal what lies behind some of the responses to structured questions and, therefore, can provide insights not revealed by the national survey results. It is important, however, not to use them for estimates of the precise prevalence of any of the phenomena studied.

The Demographic, Social, and Cultural Context

Although recent changes in mating practices on American college campuses have not been well documented, it is clear that there have been many changes in the context in which these practices occur. For instance, since the middle of the 20th century, the relative numbers of men and women enrolled in institutions of higher learning have changed dramatically (see Figure 1). In the years following World War II, college enrollments were swelled by veterans, who were mainly men,

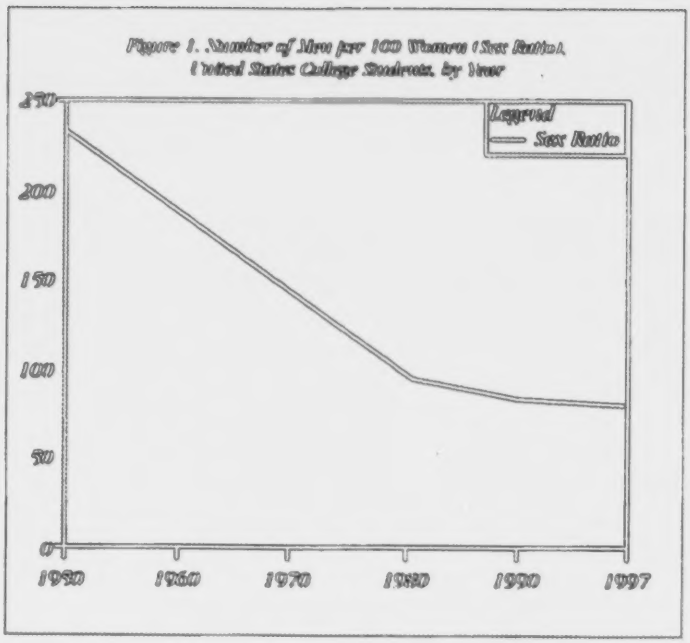
continuing their education under the GI Bill; by 1950 there were more than twice as many men as women on college campuses. This trend made for an environment rich with possibilities for women interested in finding husbands, and it is likely that finding a desirable husband was one motivation for many women's college attendance through the 1950s and into the 1960s. In addition, because women often depended on their husbands for social standing and economic security, it was not uncommon for women to drop out of college once they found a husband.[3]

As can be seen in Figure 1, significant changes had occurred by 1980, by which time more women than men were enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities. The number of men per 100 women (the sex ratio) has continued to decline since that time, dropping to only 79 in 1997. This change has reduced the opportunities for women to find desirable husbands at college. Further, the great increase in divorce in the late 1960s and 1970s made it more hazardous for women to rely on husbands for economic security and social standing. These changes, in addition to the important influences of the feminist movement, have brought about a dramatic change in women's motivations for attending college. College women and their parents today more often feel that women should be prepared to support themselves (and their families if necessary). Career aspirations that were once restricted largely to men are now common among college women.

HALF A CENTURY AGO, few college women had parents who had divorced. The proportion of college-educated women during the 1930s whose parents had divorced or separated by the time the women were age 16 was only seven percent, according to the 1972-1996 General Social Surveys. In contrast, 25 percent of the respondents to the national survey conducted for this report had parents who had divorced or separated, though that percentage was somewhat lower when they were age 16. Familiarity with marital breakups has also increased among relatives, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances of families that experienced divorce. These changes have meant that college women today are less willing to rely on marriage for economic security, and have affected their attitudes about marriage and relationships in other ways as well.

Another important change affecting the mating behavior of college women is the sexual revolution, in which sexual relations between unmarried men and women became much more socially acceptable. Contrary to common belief, the influences that brought about this change had largely ceased by around 1980. In the intervening years, disapproval of sex between unmarried persons has not decreased among young adults and disapproval of extramarital sex has actually increased.[4] Still, disapproval of sexual intercourse between unmarried persons is sharply lower than it was a few decades ago; fewer than a fourth of young adult respondents to recent national surveys say it is "always wrong" or "almost always wrong," and about half say it is "not wrong at all."[5] Related changes include a continuing

increase in nonmarital cohabitation and a reduction of the stigma attached to bearing children out-of-wedlock.



Source: Calculated from data from U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2000. *Table 297, Page 183; and* Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1965, *Table 177, Page 130. Data for 1950 and 1960 are only roughly comparable with later data.*

In addition, the demise of *in loco parentis*, a policy through which colleges and universities assumed some of the responsibility for college students that parents could no longer directly exercise, went hand in hand with the sexual revolution. Formerly, undergraduate students who were not living with their parents were usually required to live on campus or in off-campus housing approved by the institution. The most noticeable features of *in loco parentis* included separate dorms for women and men, sometimes on opposite sides of the campus, and rules and curfews for women that were stricter than those for men. When these policies began to fade away, campus life began to be organized quite differently, with women and men sometimes placed in the same dormitories, sometimes on separate floors, and sometimes on the same floors, and sometimes with men and women using the same bathrooms. Not all colleges and universities have coed dormitories, and there apparently are no data on their prevalence, but they are not uncommon.

One of the most important changes related to mating and dating on college campuses has been a substantial increase in the past quarter of a century in the average age at first marriage. The median age of women marrying for the first time had risen to 25.1 in 2000, up from less than 20.8 in 1970.[6] College educated women traditionally married about a year and half later than other wo-men,[7] and that difference may have increased in recent years. It is clear, therefore, that a diminished proportion of college women are now marrying during the usual "college ages," and it is almost certain that a smaller percentage are marrying men that they met in college. Although 63 percent of the respondents to the national survey conducted for this report said they would like to meet their future husbands in college, it seems unlikely that such a large proportion of college women will eventually wed

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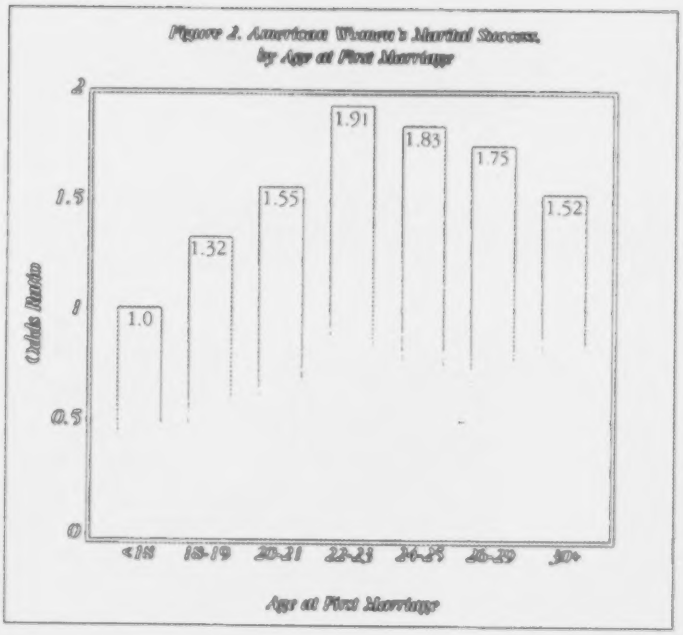


Note: Marital success is defined as being in an intact first marriage reported by the woman as being "very happy." The bars represent the odds of being in such a marriage for the women in each age-at-first-marriage category relative to the odds for women who married under age 18. Time since the first marriage, race, region of origin, and several family background variables are statistically held constant.

Source: Calculated from data from the 1973-1994 General Social Surveys.

someone they met in college.

At the same time, it appears possible, though not well documented, that many parents, educators, counselors, and older adults in general now actively discourage early marriage for young people. The fact that teenage marriages are extremely likely to end in divorce has become well known, and this may be one of the few social science findings that has had a substantial impact on behavior. There is informal evidence, including the reports of some of the subjects for the qualitative study conducted for this report, that many mothers who themselves married young advise their daughters "not to do what I did." The high failure rate among very early marriages has led some persons to believe that it is a good idea to postpone marriage until the late twenties or early thirties, even though social science evidence does not support the conclusion that the later one marries, the better. Indeed, statistically it appears that women who marry in their early to mid twenties have the best chances for marital success, although awareness of this general finding should not cause alarm to people who are not married by that time. (See Figure 2).

The overall context in which young women attend college today is one in which prospects for meeting suitable mates are not especially good, at least relative to the past, and one in which preparation for one's future career is a pre-eminent goal, one in which sexual norms are permissive, and one in which there is little encouragement for contemplating marriage in the foreseeable future. Under such circumstances, one might expect male-female relationships to be oriented toward friendship and fun, and only incidentally toward marriage. That expectation seems largely to be correct, but our research also yielded some unexpected findings.

Hooking Up

YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY grow up in an environment saturated with talk about sex and, by the time they reach college, such talk may sometimes barely elicit a yawn. It will surprise no one to learn that sex outside of committed relationships is not uncommon among American college and university women. What is more surprising, perhaps, is that the college women in our study are not the libertines that many media portrayals of unmarried young adults would lead us to believe.

Thirty-nine percent of the respondents to our national survey said they had never had sexual intercourse, and more surprising, almost a third (31 percent) of the senior women said they were virgins. The nonvirgins were not necessarily very sexually active; more than a third of them (36 percent) said they had not had sexual intercourse in the past month. Yet, while the sexual standards that many of these women apply to themselves tend to be fairly restrictive, the standards that they apply to others are more permissive. Eighty-seven percent of respondents agreed (59 percent strongly) that "I should not judge anyone's sexual conduct except my own."

On most campuses today there is a widely recognized practice, usually called "hooking up," that explicitly allows sexual interaction without commitment or even affection. Indeed, despite the fairly restrictive personal sexual standards of a majority of college women, one of the most well-defined forms of male-female interaction on campus today, shaped by relatively clear and widely shared rules and expectations, is hooking up. Hook ups usually occur between persons who do not know one another well, with little if any expectation that either person will follow through and try to continue the relationship. Hook ups can occur between two people on just one occasion, or they can occur more than once between the same two people over a period of weeks or months. The most common definition we heard was that a hook up is anything "ranging from kissing to having sex," and that it takes place outside the context of commitment.

Although most women in our study (with one exception discussed below) defined hooking up as involving sexual activity of some kind, there was some disagreement about whether a hook up implied sexual intercourse. One woman at Rutgers University said, "Anything before [sex] is considered a hook up," while a junior at the University of Virginia explained, "Some people say hook up and they mean like making out or something, but I think that most people, when they say hook up they mean like actual sex." A Colby College sophomore said hooking up "doesn't necessarily mean sex. But... sex would definitely be included in that [term]." These differences in defining a hook up seem to occur within campuses as well as among them. In the national survey, about a third of the respondents who said they had engaged in at least one hook up reported that they had never had sexual intercourse.

We did find a noticeable difference in how whites and Blacks define hook up. Among whites, hook up almost always had a clear sexual connotation. Yet, in our interviews at Howard University, an historically Black institution, the African American students we interviewed usually said that hook up implies meeting up with someone, or perhaps going out on a date with someone. One student said, "If you're hooking up with someone it's like you are going to go out together... it's not a real commitment." Another Howard University student recalled,

> *"The first time I really heard 'hooked up' in a sexual sense...[was] in my internship... my roommates were two white girls and they always said hooked up. I am like what do you mean 'We hooked up?' [And they said] 'Oh, you know, we had sex.'*

Another student said hook up could be used as in, "She hooked us up... meaning that she gave him my number...or she set us up to go on a date." One student defined hook up as having many possible meanings. She said,

> *"Sometimes hook up can mean just you and me are having sex. Sometimes it means getting together and actually forming a commitment or sometimes it just means, you know, meeting somebody... It depends on the context you use it."*

On the other campuses in our study in which Blacks are in the minority, we found that African American students seemed to blend understandings of hook up as having a social connotation or a sexual one, depending on how it is used. An African American student at New York University said, "Hooking up could be just getting together or it can go to extremes and be like sleeping together." A Colby College sophomore who is African American described having her social understanding of hooking up challenged when she arrived at school:

> *"When I first came to college I used hooking up like... let's just hook up later, like let's get together. People would just say 'What are you doing? You do not use that!'"*

Despite some of the differences across and even among groups, three-fourths of the respondents to the national survey said that the term "hook up" is commonly used at their schools to refer to sexual encounters without commitment. At some schools, other names such as "friends with benefits" and "booty call" are used to refer to a similar phenomenon (though with variations described below). Ninety-one percent of the respondents said hook ups, defined as "when a girl and a guy get together for a sexual encounter and don't necessarily expect anything further," occurred "very often" (50 percent) or "fairly often" at their schools. Forty percent of respondents in the national survey said they themselves had experienced a hook up, although only ten percent said they had done so more than six times.

Hook ups take place in a variety of settings. In the on-campus interviews there were several references to hooking up in public places, such as on the dance floor

or in a bar, which usually seemed to mean kissing (or "making out" as it was once called). One Colby College senior said, "When [people are] drunk at a dance... [they] have no inhibitions and they're willing to hook up all over the dance floor." More often, hook ups seemed to occur at parties or in students' residences, in dorms or sometimes in apartments (although not necessarily in their rooms). The same senior remembered,

> *"One time I was in my room doing work and these two people were hooking up outside my door, and they were being really loud. Like they were banging on the wall. And you could tell that they were both really drunk."*

In fact, dorms seem to be uniquely popular places for hooking up. A Rutgers University junior recalled,

> *"In the dorms I think [hooking up] was huge... it was so easy to come back to your dorm, and everyone's there at two or three in the morning. Everyone's come back, everyone's intoxicated."*

Several women noted that freshman women seemed to hook up more often, or were more likely to be receptive to hooking up. A senior at the University of Chicago observed, "I remember my freshman year... about half of the people in my house [i.e., dorm] alone hooked up with each other." A Colby College student said,

> *"As a freshman girl... you... do get a lot of attention... I was more willing to hook up with guys... because... I was so excited, you know, it was my first situation... all of a sudden... like junior and senior guys were... showing interest in you... and you're like, God, where is this coming from?"*

A Howard University student said, "To be honest [when] everybody is coming in they just hook up like oh my God." Another Colby College student who was late in her freshman year reported, "A lot of freshman girls, especially when they first get here, think that sex will lead to a relationship... and that's obviously not true." A senior at New York University observed,

> *"I think freshman year, you go out, you do the whole hook up thing, you experience lots of people in one way or another safely and then you... try to wise up a little and mature a little and try to find someone you can really share something with."*

A **NOTABLE FEATURE** of hook ups is that they almost always occur when both participants are drinking or drunk. A Rutgers University student observed, "You always hear people say, oh my gosh, I was so drunk, I hooked up with so and so..." Perhaps not surprisingly, many noted that being drunk helped to loosen one's inhibitions and make it easier to hook up. A number of students noted that being drunk could later serve as your excuse for the hook up. A Yale

University student said, "Some people like hook up because they're drunk or use being drunk as an excuse to hook up." A New York University student observed, "[Alcohol is] just part of an excuse, so that you can say, oh, well, I was drinking." A Rutgers University student commented,

> *"If you're drinking a lot it's easier to hook up with someone... [and] drugs, it's kind of like a bonding thing... and then if you hook up with them and you don't want to speak to them again, you can always blame it on the drinking or the drugs."*

Other women observed that being drunk gives a woman license to act sexually interested in public in ways that would not be tolerated if she were sober. For instance, a University of Michigan student said, "Girls are actually allowed to be a lot more sexual when they are drunk..." A University of Chicago junior observed,

> *"One of my best friends... sometimes that's her goal when we go out. Like she wants to get drunk so I guess she doesn't have to feel guilty about [hooking up]."*

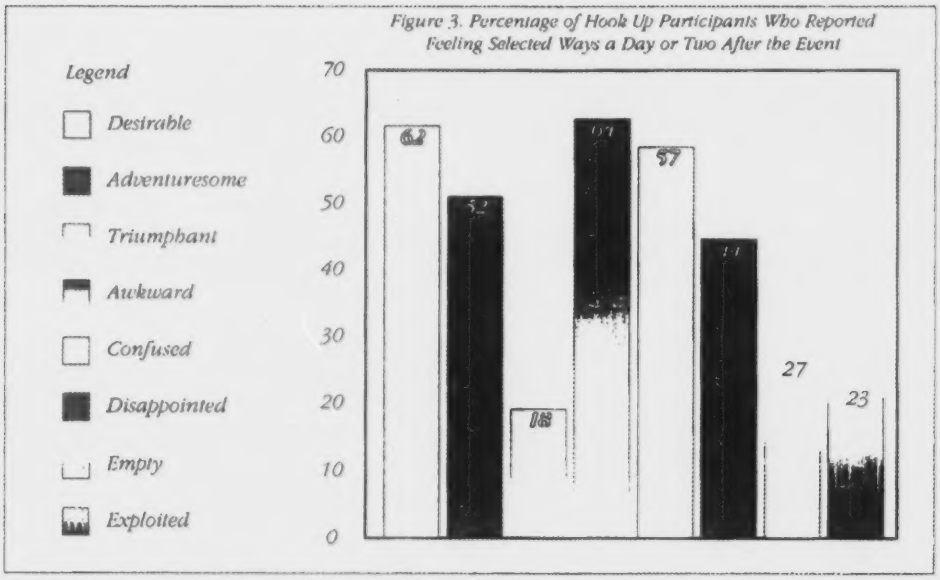
Some reported that drinking had led them to do things they later regretted. A University of Virginia student said, "My last random hook up was last October and it was bad. I was drunk and I just regretted it very much."

Sometimes a third person "hooks you up." A SUNY-Stony Brook student said, "When you say you want to get hooked up with somebody... [you say] 'You know, I don't have a boyfriend. Can you hook me up?'" A Rutgers student said, "[With a hook up you'll have his] friends [at a party] coming up saying, you know, he wants to hook up with you, you're cute, come to his room."

WOMEN IN OUR STUDY reported a wide variety of feelings about hooking up, but some common themes emerged. Women said that after a hook up they often felt awkward and sometimes felt hurt. A number of them reported not knowing if the hook up would lead to anything else, which made them feel confused if they wanted something more from the encounter. At the same time, a number of women also reported feeling strong, desirable, and sexy after a hook up. In fact, both the national survey and the on-campus interviews revealed a great deal of ambivalence about hooking up. When the national survey respondents who had experienced at least one hook up were asked to select from a list of adjectives, or to supply adjectives of their own, to indicate how they felt a day or so after a hook up, a majority selected both positive and negative adjectives. For instance, 61 percent of the women who chose "desirable" also chose "awkward" (See Figure 3).

An interviewer at SUNY-Stony Brook asked a student how satisfied she thought women were with the social situation. The student responded,

> *"Not very, because they want a stable relationship and they haven't been able to find that and sometimes they get hurt by guys. Sometimes, like a guy will call back and you think that is serious and it's not."*



The interviewer then asked her why the guy would call back if it was not serious. She replied, "He wants to hook up one more time." A Colby College sophomore said that many of her friends felt awkward after a hook up, although she did not. She said,

> *"I'm more the type that will just like go up to them [the next day] and be like, 'Hey, how are you?'... But... a lot of my friends... I've seen it happen so many times... it's like that awkward day after only it's like three months after."*

The feeling of awkwardness the next day seemed to be quite typical for many people. A University of Chicago student recalled,

> *"If it's a hook up where [I] actually stayed there... I just want to get out of there as fast as possible the next day... because you feel, it's that walk of shame thing... you've got front desk people you have to get by. You hope you don't see anybody else in the dorm. And you look like you had a rough night... It's just like awkward."*

Some of the feeling of awkwardness appears to arise not only from knowing what you did together the night before, but also from not knowing what comes next. Many women in the on-campus interviews reported feeling confused after a hook up because they were not sure how to act around the guy, and they were not sure how the guy would respond to them. A Colby College sophomore said she had decided never to hook up again because,

> *"I just don't like encountering that person [afterwards] like in the cafeteria... or in the library and just like act[ing] like things are normal and cool... It's just very hard for me to come to grips with that."*

A Rutgers University student echoed this same feeling:

> *"You're just generally nervous because you don't know what they want, you don't know if they're still interested in you. So... girls generally, you know, try and play it cool all the time."*

A student from New York University observed:

> *"A lot of people seem to cope with [hooking up] real well, but for me when it happens, it means a lot. I mean the next day I'm thinking about him. I go, what does this mean? It's crazy."*

A dominant theme among those who hooked up was the desire for something more to happen with the guy after the hook up. A New York University student said,

> *"I don't think women deal well with [hooking up]... the next day they're upset and they regret what they did, and [they ask themselves] 'Why did I do it? I wish I would have gotten his phone number. I wish he would call me.'"*

She went on to say,

> *"Something inside them thinks that this guy really cares at that moment when they're hooking up, but then in the morning, they realize all [he] wanted was one thing."*

Another student said one of her best friends "gets really emotionally attached... then she like wants it to be more or something, and then she's all upset. Because sometimes you don't know if it's supposed to like progress from there or that's it." A student at Rutgers University observed,

> *"The guys... they don't want a relationship... They want to hang out with their friends... they want to hook up... and the girls are looking, almost looking for husbands, it seems like."*

Of course, not all the women would say they are looking for husbands. Another Rutgers student observed, "I think that girls generally do want something more after they've hooked up... but there are definitely girls out there that just want a drunk hook up."

Underlying this theme of "wanting more" is a phenomenon that is distinctly different from the courtship patterns of the past. In an earlier time it was understood that it was the man's job to risk rejection first by asking the woman out on a date and seeking to impress her. It was then the woman's decision whether to pursue something with him. In contrast, women today who hook up speak of feeling confused after the hook up because they do not know whether the guy will want a relationship, and most often it appears that he does not. One Rutgers student observed about her roommate,

> *"She was hooking up with someone, she thought they were going to develop into a relationship, and he would tell her no, you know, for so many different reasons."*

A SUNY-Stony Brook senior said, "Girls usually tend [to say], 'Oh, you know, I really like him, and I hope he calls,' but he never calls." She elaborated:

> *"One of my suite mates is like that... she says, 'Why can't he call me?' and even if she wants to go to the bathroom [she asks] 'Can you keep an eye on my phone?' I'm like, 'He's not going to call,' [and] she's like, 'Please.'"*

While hooking up is portrayed by some students as a bold move made by a modern woman, it is interesting to note how often these women end up in a distinctly vulnerable position, waiting by the phone for the guy to call and allowing the guy to define the status of the relationship.

Interestingly, when women felt hurt or had regrets after a hook up, the dominant theme was one of taking full responsibility for their actions and blaming themselves. These women often commented that they were highly "emotional" or "sensitive" people (as if emotions and senses are not part of sexual activity for most women) and therefore should have "known better" than to get involved in a hook up. A New York University student said, "I can't really say that I've ever not regretted it, doing something that I've done, but I would take responsibility for it." Another student from the same school said, "I should have known that I'm ... a very sensitive person who gets embroiled in guys, and I shouldn't have done the hook up thing so lightly."

Although it was somewhat more rare, in the on-campus interviews women did also report having positive feelings about hooking up. One student at Colby College had an unusual experience after hooking up the weekend before she spoke with our interviewer. After spending the night together she and the guy went to the dining hall on Sunday morning and, she said, her friends "were absolutely blown away by the fact that he would go to breakfast with me... I was amazed too... this isn't even something I should have been impressed with, but I really was, that like a bunch of his friends were in the dining hall when we went down there and... he and I went and sat at a table by ourselves." Other women said that they felt a kind of sexual power from hooking up, saying that when they go out,

> *"We don't go out looking for boyfriends... I would say we go out looking to kiss somebody or to dance with somebody... to feel sexual.... we leave feeling empowered... it's just like, being [a] woman, being sexual, more than anything."*

Some women were suspicious when their friends said that hooking up was basically just an obligation-free good time. A University of Virginia sorority sister observed,

> *"I wake up in the morning and my sisters are talking over breakfast and they're like... we both got out of it what we wanted and there's no ties or connections. I think they feel that way on the outside... but [I think it's] a front that people put up in order to deal with the fact that maybe the guy really wasn't interested in you and it's not going to end up any long-term thing."*

IF HOOKING UP is an activity that women sometimes find rewarding but more often find confusing, hurtful, and awkward, then one might ask, why do they do it? In our on-campus interviews women named a number of reasons why they, or women they observed, hooked up. A University of Chicago student said that hooking up "is really a release... we are so stressed all the time with work." Several other students said that a woman feels in control when she is hooking up. Several women who did not hook up speculated that women who do are trying to fill a void in their lives. One of them said that these women are "very depressed individuals who use sex as a way to kind of fill the vacuum," and another said, "people have self esteem issues and think this is a way to help them by engaging in these kinds of activities... they are looking to fill that void."

However, the responses offered above were fairly rare. Instead, three other dominant themes emerged to explain women's reasons for hooking up. One major theme was that hooking up is a way to avoid the hurt and rejection that can come from talking openly about feelings. A Colby College student observed,

> *"People just get really weirded out by each other... neither of the people are willing at all to talk about their feelings... [that's] why it is easier to like hook up with someone as opposed to... talking to them."*

Another student said it is easier to hook up with a guy rather than talk to him because in hooking up "you can pretend that like it didn't mean anything to you." Still another Colby College student remarked,

> *"Sex and hooking up are not necessarily tied to as many emotions as talking face to face with someone. And especially when you can pass off sex as something that happens... while you were drunk."*

Another woman who said it is possible to hook up with one person a number of times was asked by the interviewer, "What separates multiple hook ups from a relationship?" She responded, "Like basically you never really talk to the person. It's like every time you guys get together you just... get physical." In our national survey, a small but significant number of respondents (12 percent) agreed with the statement, "Sometimes it is easier to have sex with a guy than to talk to him."

The second major theme is that hooking up is a way to avoid getting into a relationship that could be time consuming. A University of Chicago senior, when asked why women hook up, said,

> *"Sometimes because of school work, people do not want to have relationships because it is just too much of a time investment and in every other aspect it is a huge investment."*

Another University of Chicago student said she had hooked up because, "I ... did not want to feel like I belonged to someone and did not [want] to feel like I was tied down by a relationship." A Yale University student said that

> *"hooking up is physical, [people] get that [out of it]. But... also... you get... someone to be like emotional with, but not having to deal with... the time*

commitment that it takes... to like go out with somebody seriously. Having a boyfriend or girlfriend... can be very time consuming."

Perhaps the most surprising theme to emerge is that some women who hooked up were trying to avoid the pain of breaking up by avoiding commitment in the first place. A Rutgers University student said she hooked up because, "I don't want to give somebody so much of myself where I put myself in that position to get hurt." A University of Chicago senior said that she hooked up because, "I had been in a relationship before... where it ended because the person had cheated on me, and I did not want to go through that again." Another University of Chicago student said,

"I had a really ugly breakup from my high school boyfriend and I wanted to avoid having that happen again, and the way to do that might be to not get into a relationship."

A SUNY-Stony Brook student said of her friends, "Sometimes they have just broken up and [they say] I just want to be by myself right now, I want to have peace." The interviewer asked her, "Do you believe them?" and the student responded, "Some of them I do, but then they're always hooking up with guys." This student went on to say,

"When girls have always gotten their heart broken... they're like, you know, this is not working for me, forget it, I want to be by myself, but then they miss guys, so they go out and party and have fun with the guys."

After all this discussion about hooking up we might stop to ask, why do people use the term "hook up" at all? Why don't they just say "I had sex with this guy" or "I kissed that guy" or "We made out"? If it is often unclear what someone means by a "hook up," why don't people just make it more explicit? In fact, it may be that the very ambiguity of the term "hook up" is what makes it attractive for today's college students.

It is not just outside observers who are confused by the term. One Colby College student said,

"[It's] difficult because you'll say I hooked up with somebody and that's just a kiss, or...I hooked up with somebody and that can mean as much as having sex with somebody."

A University of Virginia senior complained,

"The morning after's when people say 'I hooked up with so and so.' And that, I hate it because it's ambiguous... it could be anything from kissing to sex and you wouldn't know."

Another University of Virginia student said, "Hook up can mean a variety of things. That's why you never know when someone's like, 'I hooked up last night' [what it was that they did]."

Although the sexual revolution brought about much lighter social disapproval of premarital sex, young women who are perceived as overly sexually active still risk

getting a bad reputation. Indeed, on every campus we visited the study participants said that women who hook up "too much" (but no one seems able to say exactly how much is too much) were known as "sluts," most often, and a range of other names as well, including "whore," "couch," "trash," "trick," "tease," "ho," "skanky," "easy," and "hooch." One student observed, "Just saying 'She hooks up a lot,' is bad." In contrast, men who hook up a lot are known most often as "players" (a word we also found used on every campus) or, less often, as "the man," or a "stud." It is easy to see that the names for women who hook up a lot are quite cruel and hurtful, while the names for men are laudatory, if goofy. In addition, several women noted that women can get a bad reputation not even necessarily by what they do, but by "how they dress" and "the way they carry themselves." While women today may have more choices when it comes to sex, they still know that they are walking a fine line if they choose to be sexually active, particularly when they do so with more than one partner, yet no one can tell them exactly where that line is drawn.

GIVEN THE LACK OF CLARITY about rules when it comes to sex, it may be that the ambiguity of the phrase "hook up" is attractive for a reason. If a woman tells friends that she "hooked up," or if she meets a guy at a party and they go upstairs and "hook up," the friends or the people at the party will not know exactly what happened. Perhaps the couple had sex, perhaps they just kissed, perhaps they had oral sex. No one will really know unless they ask for more clarification, and only the best of friends might do that. Clearly, even given the ambiguity of the term "hook up," women still face getting a reputation if they are perceived as hooking up too much. Nevertheless, as a Colby College student said, "I do not think there is a stigma [with hooking up]... [because] the term hooking up is more casual. It seems to imply like not much happened."

Beyond "hooking up" there are still more words that people use for non-commitment oriented sexual encounters between the sexes. A common term we heard was "friends with benefits," which, as one New York University sophomore described, is "when you call them a friend... but then you still have your little hook ups [with them]." Another New York University student said,

> *"Some people are just friends with benefits. Like I know this girl, oh God, this disgusted me. There's this guy on my floor and she lives upstairs and they'll just call each other at random times and they'll, you know, just have sex and then leave. Knock on each other's doors, satisfy themselves, and go home."*

A Howard University student observed, "sometimes you have just purely sexual relationships... booty calls or things like that." Another student at Howard University said, "People just visit each other's rooms.... if you are just friends, if [a guy has] a whole bunch of female friends [so] no one knows who is [his] girlfriend, [he is] free to date whoever [he] wants to."

A student at SUNY-Stony Brook could not come up with a word to describe this phenomenon, although she had seen it. She said,

> *"Some people just sleep with some people every once in a while, I don't even know what they would call it. My sleeping partner, I guess... they have no commitment, just every once in a while, like, okay, let's go over here and sleep with this guy."*

Perhaps most surprising was the use of the word "friend" alone to describe these kinds of interactions. A SUNY-Stony Brook senior said,

> *"A lot of times, [women] will just call [the guys they are dating] their friends, and sometimes... you don't know exactly what they're talking about, if they're intimate... cause a lot of times girls will say, like, my friends, when they mean it's something more."*

At Rutgers University the interviewer asked a student, "What are the words for various sorts of male-female connections?" The student responded, "Actually a lot of people are just friends." The interviewer then asked, "And they're not physically involved?" and the student replied, "No, they are physically involved... a lot of people are just a 'friend' because no one really seems to want a commitment anymore."

Another student, also at Rutgers University, had this to say about words for relationships between the sexes: "There's 'just a friend.'... [in which] you're a friend, but you're not." The interviewer asked, "Is there a physical relationship?" and she replied,

> *"Yes... [but] basically there's no commitment... so you can't go back [and say] like 'Oh, you did this,' [because the other person will say] but well, 'I'm just a friend, you can't yell at me for that.'"*

What is most ironic in this instance is that some students are using the word "friend" to describe a connection to another person that requires even less commitment than real friends would expect of each other. These "friendships" seem to demand nothing of the participants, other than a ready willingness to have sex when their partner requests.

At a minimum, hook ups do not appear to help young people in a critical life task, which is learning how to form and sustain mature relationships. It is fortunate, therefore, that only a minority of college women participate in them and that an even smaller minority have hooked up repeatedly. However, it would be a mistake to think that the hook up culture does not affect college women who do not participate in it, because it tends to lessen the overall quality of college mating for everybody. We found that the hook up culture is intimately bound up with — as two sides of the same coin — the other primary forms of mating on campus that fall under the wide rubric of "dating."

Joined at the Hip or Hanging Out, and Little In Between

NOT TOO LONG AGO, "dating" was a word that most people could define with little hesitation. Dating was when men and women went out together on a planned social activity, in which most often the man initiated the date, picked the woman up, and paid for any expenses. When the woman agreed to go out on a date, it did not imply that there would be an enduring relationship with the man, nor did it involve the expectation of any particular level of physical intimacy. Both men and women often dated several persons at a time, and more popular people might have two or three dates a week. The acknowledged purpose of the activities was to have fun, but there also was an implicit understanding that dating was a matter of "shopping around" for a prospective spouse. In addition, dating was an institution, in the sense that it took place amid a set of widely understood norms and expectations. For instance, it was considered insulting for a man to ask a woman on a date only a day or two before the planned activity, and a woman might stay at home rather than accept a last minute invitation.

Today, few parents of college students would assume that their daughters' social lives revolve entirely around social activities that are planned and paid for by men. Yet probably few parents or other older adults are aware of how extraordinarily different "dating" is today. In our on-campus interviews we found that no term for interactions between college women and men holds more ambiguity, and reflects more confusion, than the word "dating." Indeed, there are at least four separate ways that the word is used, and this complexity could help to explain an otherwise mystifying observation: While college women today will say that actual dates are rare, the word "dating" is still used by many of them to describe their own or their friends' interactions with the opposite sex.

A number of women we interviewed said that dating in the traditional sense is rare on their campuses. A New York University student said, "I don't see a dating scene. I've never been asked on a date." A senior at Colby College observed,

> *"People don't date here.... if you wanted to go... out to dinner with a guy... you would probably [already] be dating that guy. Like that would be a big move at Colby."*

A student at the University of Virginia said, "Guys don't do that at UVA... they don't ask you on a date... they'll say... give me your number, we're going out, whatever." Yet, if women still use the word "dating" quite frequently, what do they mean? We found that "dating" in the sense of describing interactions between males and females was used in at least four distinct ways. Two uses of the term appear to be quite common, while the other two are less common. However, all four uses of the word "dating" are fluid, and couples can move from one to another in various ways.

The first, and one of the primary uses of the word dating, is something we are calling (following the phrase used by some of the study participants) "joined at the

hip" dating. "Joined at the hip" relationships occur when a woman and a man meet and form a bond that quickly becomes serious and intense. They become sexually intimate and it is expected that neither of them will see other people. They spend most, if not all, of their nights together at one or the other's dorm room or apartment, and they eat many of their meals together, study together, share in doing laundry, and more. A student at SUNY-Stony Brook said that in the case of her current boyfriend, "We decided to [go on a date] and then, jokingly, like after the end of the date, he's like, so are we together? And I'm like, yeah, I guess so." A University of Virginia student said that on her campus,

> *"I think relationships tend to move a lot faster, because you basically can see the person every day... Like my friends that have boyfriends here, they stay over at their boyfriend's house like every night."*

When friends of these couples are asked to describe the couples' relationship, they will say they are "dating." Notably, when women in the on-campus interviews spoke of not having enough time for a committed relationship in college, it appeared to be this kind of "joined at the hip" relationship that they were envisioning.

THE SECOND TYPE of dating is more rare. These are boyfriend-girlfriend relationships that in some ways resemble "joined at the hip" dating, but these relationships progress much more slowly. Each person has agreed that they will not see other people, but the woman and man see each other several times a week rather than daily, and they may spend only some or perhaps no nights together at each other's dorm room. These couples are committed to each other in the sense that they are seeing no one else, but they may or may not be sexually active, and they continue to spend time with their friends and engage in other aspects of college life apart from each other. Some of the women who described these relationships said that they are guided by a religious-sexual ethic that helps them to structure their relationship in this way. A student at SUNY-Stony Brook said,

> *"I'm very close to someone now, one of my brothers in Christ. And we're still just really working out our own personal relationships in God... I would like for him to be the one I marry... but we still always need to leave room for God's work."*

Others do not name religious reasons for "going slow," as one woman put it, but said that this was the way that they preferred to pursue a relationship. A New York University student said, "I don't want to see [the person I'm dating] everyday.... I like my privacy." A student at the University of Virginia said that she and her boyfriend "started talking and then we had... a first date and we kind of built a relationship from there." Like the "joined at the hip" couples, when their friends are asked to describe these couples, they also will say that they are "dating."

In the national survey, 48 percent of the women said they currently had a boyfriend, and 60 percent reported having had a boyfriend since coming to col-

lege. When women report having a boyfriend it could refer to either type of committed relationship referred to above. We found that 24 percent of survey respondents who said they had a boyfriend also said they had never had sexual intercourse. This finding provides some indication of how many women are in slower moving relationships.

THE THIRD TYPE of dating appeared more rare, and this is dating in the traditional sense of going out on dates in which the man invites a woman to go out, picks her up, and pays for the date. In the national survey, only 37 percent of the respondents said they had been on more than six dates of this kind, and a third said they had been asked on two dates or fewer. We might not expect freshmen women to have had many dates after only four or five months at college, but only 47 percent of the juniors and 50 percent of the seniors reported having had more than six dates. Since 48 percent of the women reported having a current boyfriend and 60 percent said they had had at least one boyfriend since coming to college, it appears that a woman can have a boyfriend while participating in little or no dating, in the traditional sense. Indeed, a Colby College student said, "I had a friend who was dating her boyfriend for three months and they've never really gone on a date."

In the on-campus interviews we found that when traditional dating did occur, it often seemed to happen around a structured occasion, such as a fraternity-sorority event or on Valentine's Day. Yet, overall, college women do not seem particularly upset about the lack of traditional dating or about any other aspect of male-female relations at their schools. Eighty-eight percent of the national survey respondents and 78 percent of the on-campus study participants agreed that "In general I am happy with the social scene here." At the same time, most of the on-campus study participants had at least minor complaints, and several of them said they would like to experience more dates, in the traditional sense.

While some women expressed a wish that more traditional dating would occur, some women also noted that if a guy asked them on a date in this way, they ultimately did not find the guy very appealing. A Rutgers University student recalled,

> *"I actually had [a date] on Valentine's Day... [he took me out to dinner] and it was very nice, and I didn't give him anything in the end. I just gave him a hug and said thank you. He called again, but I'm not interested."*

In several cases it appeared that "nice guys" who tried to follow women's stated wishes by asking them on traditional dates were less interesting to some women than men who interacted with women in other ways. Indeed, several respondents noted the odd (and probably timeless) irony that some women seem more attracted to "players" who hook up a lot than to the nice guys. One Colby College student said she and her friends have "made in our head, like, nice guys lists ...we're

like Todd is a nice guy and Jeff is a nice guy...there are nice guys. We just don't make an effort to hang out with them. And we're like, what are we thinking?"

THE FINAL TYPE of dating is the other primary use of the term and, from our on-campus interviews, it appears to be the most common. In addition to "joined at the hip" dating, we found that "dating" was most often used synonymously with "hanging out," and hanging out could mean many things. Women could hang out with several different guys, going out with them or spending time with them among groups of friends. Women or men might invite each other to come over to their dorm or apartment and hang out to watch a movie, alone or among friends, or they might hang out together at the library and study. A Howard University student said,

> *"Formal dating like 'let me pick you up and we'll go somewhere'... it happens, but it's rare... a lot of times a date could just be coming down to the room and watching a movie together."*

A University of Virginia student explained, "Sometimes the dates in college can be like come over and study. They're not always the typical 'let me take you out to dinner and a movie.'" Also at the University of Virginia, another student said, "It's not that typical around here that you go out on a date... You hang out. Like you hang out with your friends or just visit them at their apartment."

Of course, if people are hanging out together in a group and drinking, a hook up can occur. In such cases the distinction between hooking up and dating becomes blurred. A woman who hangs out with a guy might call it dating, if she is thinking about the time spent with the guy or if she wants to be discreet about the sexual involvement. (As one woman said, "Dating sounds cleaner than hooking up.") On the other hand, she might call it hooking up, if she is recalling the sexual activity that occurred and does not mind making it known. Still another possibility is that the way a woman feels about a guy might determine whether she calls it a hook up or a date. As one University of Virginia student put it, "Hook ups happen way more than just dates. Dates, you're actually interested in the person. A hook up it's like you just want to get something."

Indeed, all of these forms of dating have porous boundaries, and couples can move from one type to another. "Joined at the hip" couples and slower progressing boyfriend-girlfriend couples might get together initially through a traditional date, through a hook up, or by hanging out together as friends over a period of time. Or, slower progressing boyfriend-girlfriends could become "joined at the hip" by starting to spend all their time together. A UC-Berkeley student observed,

> *"There really is not much dating... it's like people either just start hanging out together and live together and they are boyfriend and girlfriend. Or, they just like do random hook ups and whatever and go into relationships."*

A Yale University student described the progression of one of her relationships:

> *"We didn't talk about it. We kissed. I guess that... at the end it sort of became clear [that we were together], and after that we just started to hang out all the time. And at that point I knew that we were dating. And later on, after a couple weeks, like we actually became a couple, as in I would refer to him as my boyfriend."*

Further, the choices people make in relationships can be, in part, a reaction to other kinds of relationships that they perceive as available to them. Some women in slower progressing boyfriend-girlfriend relationships said they were explicitly avoiding taking their relationship to a "joined at the hip" level, because they thought it was important to maintain their own separate friendships and activities. Some women who longed for traditional dates were reacting against the ambiguity and confusion of "hanging out," which fosters situations in which a woman does not know if a certain guy is attracted to her or just likes her "as a friend."

Although we cannot be sure of the men's motivations, it appears likely that some men ask women to come over and "hang out" rather than ask them on a traditional date so as to avoid making their interest in a woman known and thus setting themselves up for possible rejection or, on the other hand, suggesting to the woman that he wants a greater level of commitment than he in fact may want. It seems possible that the fear of suddenly ending up in a "joined at the hip" relationship, much less a committed but slow-going boyfriend-girlfriend relationship, could be a factor in why men are reluctant to express their interest in particular women by asking them on dates.

When it comes to the hook up culture, the phenomenon of "joined at the hip" dating appears to be highly significant, because the hook up culture and these fast moving committed couples are two sides of the same coin. As the Yale University student put it,

> *"There's a saying here that people are like 'altar bound or messing around'... there's a lot of really solid couples that like have been together forever, and then there are a lot of people who are just like dating this one and that one and... getting physically involved."*

Indeed, women who said they preferred to hook up because commitment seemed so time consuming seemed to be thinking of these "joined at the hip" couples when making this observation. On the other hand, women who did not want to engage in the hook up culture, and who knew that they preferred a committed relationship instead, sometimes seemed to feel that a "joined at the hip" relationship was their only alternative, but they bemoaned the fact that they quickly lost the opportunity to see other people by entering one of these relationships. Women who had been in a "joined at the hip" relationship that had ended with a painful breakup sometimes reported that they had decided to hook up rather than get involved again in a committed relationship.

Hooking up, hanging out, and joining at the hip — forms of relating which, based on our observations, are often characterized by either too little commitment or too much — all appear to be reactions to, and reinforcements of, the lack of a courtship culture. Because processes for mating and dating are not socially prescribed and not clear, women feel that they must make up their own rules as they go along, but they are trying to act on a basis of essentially private and individual rules in an inextricably *social* context, a context in which other people's choices are strongly influencing their lives. Thus they end up sometimes satisfied, but often confused, sometimes hurt, and usually unaware of how their present situation bears any connection to their goal of marriage in the future.

When Courtship Disappears

ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES TODAY, are there any generalized norms and socially prescribed practices that help young women think about sex, love, commitment, and marriage? If many of these women want to achieve a happy marriage, are there any social processes at work that are helping them to attain this goal?

Despite the complex feelings about hooking up and dating that women shared with us, 88 percent of the national survey respondents and 78 percent of the on-campus study participants agreed that "In general I am happy with the social scene here." At the same time, all but a very few of the women in our study expressed high hopes for marrying well in the future, and 63 percent said that they would like to meet a future husband in college. In response to a different question on our national survey, 83 percent of the women agreed (48 percent strongly) that "The things I do in my relationship today will affect my future marriage." Yet, while agreeing that their present relationships and future marriage were in some way connected, we repeatedly discovered, in our in-depth interviews with these young women, that their sense of this connection was often vague at best.

A few women did see an unambiguous connection between present relationships and future marriage. A student at the University of Michigan said,

> *"It is strange but I feel like I have a commitment to whoever I will end up with... So a lot of my time right now is kind of laying the groundwork for what I hope will be a healthy situation later on. A lot of people are like... 'Why do you not just hook up with anyone?' And I am like, there are reasons and it is because of the future."*

Yet this woman's attitude appeared to be a minority one. Many women either saw little or no connection between present and future relationships, or their understanding of this connection was curiously flat. A student at New York University said, "[The present and the future are] connected because I will still have the same values and principles that I have now, but I just won't be single anymore."

A number of women said that the present and the future are connected because whatever heartache or confusion they experience now gives them lessons for the future. A University of Michigan student said,

> *"Early relationships prepare you for marriage because it's like, oh, what type of person do I want to be with? Oh, I've had these bad experiences. Or, I've learned from this relationship that I should do this and I shouldn't do this."*

A sophomore at Howard University said that "I am kind of learning from a lot of the mistakes that I have made." At a further extreme, some women saw their future marriage as the reason to experiment widely in the present. A Rutgers University student said,

"I think hooking up with different people and seeing what you like and don't like is a good idea. Because eventually you're going to have to... marry someone and I'd just like to know that I experienced everything."

Although it is admirable to take risks and learn from one's mistakes, these women would probably find it difficult to explain how having your heart broken a few or even many times in your early years — or trying to separate sex from feeling, as in hooking up — is good preparation for a trusting and happy marriage later on.

If these young women often did not see a connection between their present and the future, it is not because they are willfully disregarding such an idea. In many cases it appears these women's parents and other older adults encourage young people to delay marriage, gain a wide variety of experiences, and keep their options open. These young women are gamely trying to take this advice. But while their elders have much to say about what they should not do during their college years (do not marry too early, do not get pregnant) they do not seem to provide much guidance about what young women *should* do. Often it seems that many of today's young women are left to negotiate a complex time in their lives — full of conflicting needs, feelings, and demands — almost entirely on their own. Nowhere is the sense that these women are making it up as they go along more clear than when it comes to talking about commitment.

Some women do want commitment and, if they have found it, sound very satisfied, such as the student who reported, "My boyfriend is my best friend and I'm very committed to him." At the same time, college life can present difficult choices for a committed couple, such as, if one of you plans to study abroad for your junior year, should you maintain the commitment during that time? If your boyfriend is a year or two older than you, should you stay committed after he graduates? Should you maintain a commitment through summer break? One student said she was reluctant to stay committed to a boyfriend even through spring break, because the whole point of spring break was to hook up and have fun.

Several women felt that if the relationship was anything other than fully satisfying at the moment, the commitment need not be maintained. A senior at New York University said,

"If it's not good, then you're not my boyfriend, that's how I think of it.... I'm not sure if I'm making this sound right... I believe in exclusivity, I do. But at the same time, I also believe in being 20 years old, living in Manhattan... at this age, and at this opportunity, the only reason to be exclusive is if it's really good."

Other women say that as entering freshmen, living on their own for the first time, they were reluctant to get into a commitment because they did not want to be tied down; indeed, many women we interviewed felt that having a boyfriend consumed all their time and limited their options. A sophomore at Rutgers University said that

none of her friends want boyfriends because "being in college... it's such a good opportunity to meet new people... they don't want to get tied down."

Other women said they are waiting for the absolute right guy to come along. A student at UC-Berkeley said,

> *"I've met a couple of nice guys but there's always something intrinsically wrong with him that would keep me from dating him... I've gone a year without a boyfriend now... it's because my standards have just gotten so high that it's hard to find someone to meet them all."*

A student at the University of Michigan said she would like to have a boyfriend "eventually... if I find the right person... because I'm very picky."

Still others reach a point where, as a couple, they feel so committed and in love that they do not know what comes next. The natural impulse is to consider marriage, but they fear that their family and friends would disapprove. The only alternative, therefore, seems to be to break up. A junior at the University of Virginia said:

> *"When I first got to UVA, my first weekend, I went out to a fraternity party right away and I met a guy and we started dancing. And we hit it off right away and we did for two years... now we broke up... but we broke up just because the relationship got way too serious and it was like all right, either let's get married or not. And I'm, you know, I'm still in college. I don't feel comfortable deciding right now and neither does he. So we broke up with an understanding though, okay, we'll try to see other people. Even though right now, emotionally, I just don't want to."*

Similarly, other college women are fortunate to find love and commitment, but as their senior year dawns they begin to wonder if they should have used these college years to experiment instead. A Colby College senior who had just broken up with a boyfriend she still loved put it this way:

> *"The reason why I wanted to separate from my boyfriend was because I wanted my freedom. Like I wanted to be able to date other people... and I guess... we both think that if it's meant to be then we will come back together someday."*

Many college students seem acutely conscious that the years after graduation will be full of movement and unpredictability, as each person chooses between work, graduate school, and travel, all of which could take place anywhere in the world, and all of which in their minds requires almost absolute freedom and flexibility. A freshman at the University of Washington said,

> *"I can't decide if I would want to meet [my future husband] here, because then it's like, okay, we're going to get married and... I just can't see how you would be able to do research or a dissertation while you're planning your honeymoon."*

Since they have little social support for taking on this new stage of life as a married couple, many of these young adults feel they must be basically alone, solo

journeyers in a globalized world where commerce and individual opportunity come first, certainly not family, and definitely not marriage.

College women today face a complex set of decisions. Will I be sexually active before marriage? Do I have to be in love and committed first, or is it OK to "experiment?" How many encounters are "too many" when it comes to sex? If I hope to get married someday, how many people would I like to have slept with previous to my husband? Or, if I choose not to be sexually active before marriage, will I be able to find a boyfriend who agrees with my decision? How long should I wait before getting married? And where do I find support for my decision not to have sex when it seems like everybody around me is doing so?

It is not only outside observers who are confused by the mating and dating situation on college campuses today — there is considerable confusion and disagreement among college women themselves over the definitions, meanings, and practices of hooking up, dating, having a boyfriend, and more. Yet, interestingly, while women who participated in our study rarely complained about college men, they did spend a lot of time identifying and criticizing the lack of rules and clarity on their campuses when it came to sex and relationships. In our national survey, only 49 percent of women agreed (only 11 percent strongly) that "At my college there are clearly understood informal rules about relationships."

A student at the University of Virginia observed,

> *"There's definitely some weird do's and don'ts about dating... [you ask when] is it officially a date, or when are you officially in a relationship... [and] people struggle with do ... they say they are this guy's girlfriend."*

A member of our research team spotted graffiti in a library carrel at Haverford College (not a campus at which we conducted interviews) that vividly expressed a student's frustration with the contradictions of campus social life:

> *"What I want to know is why don't people at Haverford date? It's either 'Haver-married' or a hook up or nothing at all. That isn't normal. Are people here just socially inept?"*

Beside it, another graffiti writer replies, "Get over it. Everyone at every other college says the same thing."

MANY WOMEN we interviewed were at a loss to explain how two people become a couple. One student from the University of Michigan was asked by the interviewer, "How does one go about getting a boyfriend?" The student exclaimed,

> *"Do not ask! I do not know... I am really confused by what I see. Sometimes you see these relationships... they seem comfortable but they do not seem to talk about anything... You really have to trust someone to be able to talk to him and in order to get that trust, where does that come from?"*

A Colby College student was asked how people get to be a couple, and replied,

> *"I think that maybe they're in the same social circle.... I guess they end up like dating and hooking up and going out together, I don't know. They become boyfriend and girlfriend. So I don't know."*

A student at Rutgers University explained that two people get to be a couple by hooking up, then "You go... see a movie, go get something to eat, you know, hang out."

Some women seemed less confused, but at the same time their picture of campus life is not rosy. A University of Virginia student said,

> *"This is not a place where dating occurs... this is definitely a place where a lot of hooking up occurs and maybe dating on a very casual level. But this is not a place where a lot of people come and develop... strong relationships with someone of the opposite sex."*

Another University of Virginia student said, "The random hook ups because of alcohol happen all the time... I've talked to people about how there is just no dating because of it."

Certainly, our national survey shows that plenty of women do find a boyfriend, and not all of these relationships develop from hook ups. One woman at the University of Virginia said she and her boyfriend got together because, "He was just real persistent, so I eventually started liking him." A Colby College senior recalled that when she started dating her current boyfriend,

> *"People were surprised. No one was really dating... people were hooking up with people or becoming friends with people, but they weren't really dating. And I had met him through friends and like we didn't do anything [sexual for a while]."*

A student at UC-Berkeley said,

> *"I think I'm a little different from other girls... for me a date would consist of going out trying to get to know the person, having conversation, finding out their background, doing something that is enjoyable... it doesn't consist of dancing or freaking [i.e., dancing that imitates sex]. It doesn't consist of sex."*

Although some women seem to have more clarity about how to find the relationships they wanted, they seemed to be in the minority. For the most part, women expressed uncertainty when it came to naming shared rules or expectations on their campuses concerning relationships. A clear illustration of this point is how women responded to our question about who pays when women and men go on dates. The rules, if they exist, are personal rules-of-thumb.

Some women were clear about their own thoughts on the subject. A University of Chicago student said, "I do not feel comfortable at all letting them pay so usually I will pay for my half and they will pay for their half." A SUNY-Stony Brook sophomore said,

"Personally, I think... [paying for the date should be] half and half because it's a first date. Later on in the relationship you could have him pay, but [on the] first date, you should go half and half."

A student at Yale University replied, "I pay my way," then explained:

"Like I've dated guys in the past where [they are] like, 'I [i.e., the guy] must pay for everything'... We would be walking down the street and I would get a slurpee and they'd be like 'No, I must pay'... [and then I would say] 'No, I will pay for the slurpee' and [they're] like okay, fine."

A student at Rutgers University said,

"I usually like to have guys pay for me if they're going to take me out... it's old-fashioned... some girls, like they're always paying and I don't understand that."

More often, women sounded confused about the whole topic. A Howard University junior said, "I know some females ... [who are] like I don't know if he's paying and... let me bring some extra money." A New York University student said, "He's the one who has to pay," but then changed her mind: "Well, no, I'm being very different now. Now I'm treating... I know some people are all about, he has to pay, otherwise he's cheap. Not me." After making a clear statement earlier, the Yale University student decided the whole subject was complicated and described a mock scenario:

"You're going to a movie with some guy that you're not really sure if you're dating... and... you have to decide who's buying the movie ticket... You remember that your friend once said like if you want to make a definite statement that you're not dating you should pay for your own ticket, and then you think you remember something you read in like Emily Post that guys should always pay for both."

As older outsiders looking in, one of our main observations about campus social life today is that, insofar as there has been a virtual disappearance of socially defined rituals and relationship milestones intended to help young people date and mate — even ones appropriately updated for our time — confusion and ambiguity reign.

We certainly do not suggest that a return to 1950s style dating is either possible or desirable. The practices of that time arose organically from a wide variety of quite different social conditions, and it would therefore be useless to seek to reinstall such forms today. A few women in our interviews said that they longed for more traditional dating. But most seemed to be saying that they appreciate the new kinds of power that women have, yet long for more clarity regarding how to exercise this power. One young woman at Colby College expressed the conflict succinctly:

"We don't have the traditional dating scene [on this campus]. And ... [it] makes things awkward very often. But in another sense I think it's also the

product partially of... the women's liberation movement... in that sense I can see it in a good light in that women are able to take more of an initiative... that's something that does make me happy... although like so often I hate the dating scene here."

HOW, THEN, are college women attempting to find clarity amid the awkwardness and ambiguity of the post-traditional dating era? How do these women, who are encouraged to be active determiners of their own lives, integrate these new opportunities with their long-term desire to find love and intimacy with a spouse?

In the on-campus interviews we found that many women, usually independently, were struggling to articulate rules and expectations that would help them to make sense of the prevailing confusion. Some women were clear that more rules were needed, such as a sophomore at Colby College who said, "Hooking up... I think it's okay for people to do that if that's what they want. But I also think that like rules should be laid out in the beginning." Other women may not have recognized that they were looking for "rules," but they nevertheless cited specific procedures or advice that they tried to follow in their interactions with the opposite sex.

One of the more common "rules" is that women and men should be friends before they start dating. When asked, "How would an ideal relationship start?" a student at Howard University said, "The most important thing is to be friends first." A New York University student said, "I find couples tend to form from friends," and a UC-Berkeley student said,

"I look for friendship way before [a] relationship because I figure if I can't just be friends with them then the idea of trying to sustain any kind of romantic thing on top of that just falls through."

Other students observed that relationships that form from friendships have a downside as well. A Rutgers University student said,

"I used to date... my best guy friend... [but when we broke up] I lost a best friend and a boyfriend. So it kind of hits you a little bit harder when it used to be your best friend."

A student at the University of Virginia said, "I see people who... don't have boundaries with their guy friends and then... it goes into a relationship without them really knowing it."

In the chapter on hooking up, in addition to "hook up" we saw that some people who sleep with others without commitment refer to these partners as "friends with benefits" or even just "friends." On the one hand, it appears that women who want to be friends first are looking for a way to spend time with a guy without the expectation of immediate sexual activity (as in hooking up), and without the expectation of almost immediate commitment (as in most forms of dating). In other

words, it sounds like they are trying to recreate the lower intensity "shopping around" experience that traditional dating often provided. Yet, in trying to avoid the ambiguities and pressures of hooking up and contemporary dating, they can get caught in another set of ambiguities, such as when one person thinks that going out to dinner as friends is a "date" and the other does not, or when one person thinks that friends can have sex while the other person thinks friendship means just the opposite.

Indeed, a common source of confusion appears to be when "friends" who are not sexually involved decide to spend time together socially, as we saw earlier when women discussed their feelings about who should pay for a date. One Howard University student explained,

> *"We call them 'trick date[s]'... like you have a male friend but he really wants something more than a friendship. And so he'll invite you to go somewhere and you'll say yeah, because that's your friend. And then when you go out with them they are trying to like hold your hand or they are trying to pay for you... and you realize that you've been tricked to go on a date."*

A University of Michigan student had a brave, individual strategy for confronting this situation. She said,

> *"I don't [want] to get any mixed signals... If they were like, 'Oh, do you want to go out sometime?' ... I would say 'Oh, on a date?'... I don't want to set myself up for disappointment and find out that it was just like a friend thing."*

Another student at the University of Chicago described trying to figure out in retrospect whether one of these "friend things" was actually a date: "He paid for everything. So that's also a big sign [that it was a date]. And there was like physical contact... an arm around each other, something like that."

If the early stirrings of a relationship — meeting, getting to know each other, going out together — are often confusing for today's college women, another prime source of confusion is how to know when you are a couple, or when you have become girlfriend and boyfriend. There was vast agreement among the women that being girlfriend and boyfriend meant that the couple was supposed to be sexually exclusive; in the national survey 99 percent of women agreed that they expected a boyfriend to be sexually faithful to them. Therefore, it is important to define the moment when commitment is real, so that both people will share a clear expectation that neither should continue seeing other people. Some women talked about women friends who thought that this moment of exclusivity had arrived far earlier than their chosen boyfriend had — and were crushed to find that he was still sleeping with other girls. One UC-Berkeley student observed, "Sometimes people assume they are exclusive when they are not, because they've never discussed it." Therefore, many women said that the only way to know if you are actually a

couple — as opposed to two people who are just hooking up a lot, or who are "friends" — is to talk about the relationship. This was often referred to as "the talk" or "the conversation" and, more often than not, it appears to be initiated by the woman. Other than the talk, the only other apparently common way a woman knows she is officially in a relationship is if she overhears the guy referring to her as his "girlfriend" when he is talking to other people. A student at Rutgers University said "the conversation" is basically, "What are we?" and it is provoked because,

> *"You never know what to say... and you're like, are we friends? Are we something more than that? You just don't really know. I think that happens all the time."*

A student at Colby College agreed,

> *"It's a funny conversation because neither of you really wants to talk about it because it's... putting yourself on the line... having to go out there and say... 'I really like [you],' because someone's going to have to say it first."*

She went on to say, "Maybe it is more of a girl thing ... girls need that security that... yes, we have established that we are truly together." Another Colby College student said,

> *"I think women always are [more likely to raise the topic]... [because] if you're investing something into a relationship [then] you want it to be something. And if... the partner in the relationship isn't as invested you want to know."*

A sophomore at the University of Washington told us,

> *"[A couple is] defined by the two people. Like there's always that relationship talk and... I've had relationship talks where I'm the person who brings it up and says okay... 'What's going on here? Are you dating anyone else? Are we committed or not committed?' And then also there's been times where I just haven't been very committed to them myself. And he's just started referring to me as his girlfriend. So I'm just like oh, okay, so now he sees me that way, so therefore I am. But it wasn't really a serious relationship to me."*

A student at Yale University said she knew she was a guy's girlfriend because "at one point he sent me some email about some conversation he had where he referred to me as his girlfriend and... I was just like, oh, okay... so that's the way it is."

Clearly, deciding when two people should begin publicly identifying themselves as a couple is something that is often left to the woman to pursue (or to passively find out). In addition, some women said that they deal with the lack of clarity around relationships by simply asking the men out themselves, although this appeared to be more rare. A student at SUNY-Stony Brook said, "I think that's becoming more common, for girls to approach guys." Another student at SUNY-Stony Brook said she and her current boyfriend got together because, "I asked him

out. I asked him if he wanted to be my boyfriend, and he said yes." At Rutgers University a student said,

> *"I don't think that... females conform to the rule that... they're not supposed to ask the guy out. It doesn't happen here... like the girls waiting for the guys to make the first move... We're just as assertive as they are."*

When asked how she felt about this, she replied, "I'd prefer a more traditional [situation]."

At Yale University a student said,

> *"I asked him out... I called him up and asked him to the movies... We each paid individually. It wasn't a date, it was just going out... It was my idea of saying I'm interested."*

The interviewer asked her, "Do you think he understood that?" and the woman replied, "No, I actually found out later that he had absolutely no idea." At Rutgers University the interviewer asked a student, "Can a girl call and say do you want to go out?" The student replied, "Oh yeah... the guys seem to like that more, I guess." The interviewer then asked her, "Do you think girls are comfortable with it?" and the student quickly replied, "No, they hate it."

Indeed, on several campuses women noted that men at their schools seemed "passive." A woman at Colby College told a story about a guy friend who apparently could not conceive of asking a woman on a date, even when he already knew the woman liked him:

> *"One of my [guy] friends... he knows that [this girl] likes him and we were like, 'Well, you know, call her'... He was like 'Well, yeah, she likes me but what do you want me to do about it?'... and we were like, 'Well, call her!' And he's like, 'That's so high school.'... He's like, 'Well, you want me to ask her out on a date?' And then we were like, 'Yeah,' and he's like 'That's so high school!'"*

ALTHOUGH many people would say that women today have more power in relationships than women did in the 1950s — and women indeed do have far more social power today — in reality they may not have nearly as much power in relationships with men as they appear to. Male initiative was one of the defining features of the traditional dating system, and its decline has almost certainly resulted, to some extent, from the feminist movement and a desire for greater equality and symmetry in male-female relationships. However, it is also likely to stem from the low sex ratio among college students and the fact that the men can have sexual encounters, and perhaps enter into commitments, with less expenditure of time, energy, and money, and with less risk of rejection, than the old dating system required.

At the same time, although the men in some respects appear to be more passive than in the past, they still hold much of the power in most of these scenarios.

34 B

Women and men hook up, and men decide whether anything more will happen. A man asks a woman to go somewhere with him, but keeps her guessing about his intentions. Men and women become sexually involved and spend a lot of time together, but usually the woman has to ask (and risk rejection) whether they are officially in a relationship. When she puts the question to him (initiates "the talk"), the man decides. Sometimes the man decides they are in a relationship without even talking to the woman about it; she finds out when he refers to her as his "girlfriend" around other people. In two of the examples we heard about, the woman then says to herself, "Oh, so that's the way it is," even though in one case she was not particularly interested in him.

Granted, women in these scenarios also have power. They of course do not have to hook up, and sometimes it is they, not the men, who decide that nothing further will happen after the hook up. Women can refuse to go on a date and they can refuse to hang out with a guy. Women can initiate hook ups, and they can also ask guys out on dates, which some are happy to do, while others say they hate it. But, we only heard of a few instances in which women, or even the two parties as equals, decided the relationship status. When it came to deciding if they were now a public, committed couple, the final decision was almost always left up to the men.

ALTHOUGH ROMANCE historically could be described as a struggle for power between men and women, and although many of these questions and ambiguities are not new, in the past societies had recognized sets of rules and expectations that helped women think about what they wanted when it came to love, sex, commitment, and marriage. In an earlier time the pathway to marriage had a name, "courtship," a word that now seems as quaint as the practices it described. The University of Chicago scholar, Amy Kass, writes that in our present situation "there are no socially prescribed forms of conduct that help guide young men and women in the direction of matrimony... Even — indeed especially — the elite, those who in previous generations would have defined the conventions in these matters, lack a cultural script whose denouement is marriage." Although it is clear that our campuses lack a culture of courtship, Kass makes clear, and we agree, that we do not want to "roll back the clock," nor would we want to abandon women's gains in social status and power. "If courtship or something like it is to come back," she concludes, "it must do so under vastly different social conditions, and it must no doubt adopt different forms."[8]

Yet, the question might still be asked, why does our post-modern, egalitarian society need to occupy itself with a nineteenth century sounding notion like courtship? One reason is that having access to social scripts and clear norms helps people to deal with the inevitable ups and downs of romantic love. Another reason is that, particularly regarding sexuality and romance, social norms not only con-

strain individual self-expression; they also facilitate and empower it. Without such norms, people struggle to create order all on their own and, typically, when they cannot achieve this tall order, they blame themselves when things go wrong.

In our interviews, when women talked about feeling badly after a hook up, they usually blamed themselves for engaging in the hook up in the first place and, more strangely, for having allowed themselves ever to have feelings about the guy. Some commented that they were particularly "emotional" or "sensitive" people and said something like, "I should have known better than to get emotionally involved." Clearly, women and men are responsible for their actions in a hook up, but it is notable that these women rarely noted any responsibility on the part of the guys (only hopes that he might call them back). In our national survey only 41 percent of women agreed that "When it comes to social life on this campus, men have a better deal than women," a number that we might expect to be higher if most women held men equally responsible for their dissatisfaction with the hooking up and dating scenes. Neither, in our interviews, did women often identify something amiss in the larger campus culture that might be responsible for the situation in which they found themselves.

Because social processes for mating and dating are not clear, these college women often feel they must make up their own rules as they go along, but, they are trying to follow privatized rules for inherently social interactions, a very hard thing to attempt. Yet, amid all of this confusion, college women say they are in what is likely to be the best situation in their lives to meet a wide variety of men with whom they share much in common, some of whom might make good husbands. Almost every one of these young women wants to be married someday. While they say for the most part that they are satisfied with the social scene at their schools, the pathway to marriage has curiously disappeared, and when they are asked more detailed questions about their lives, many of these women are clearly trying to sort out their next steps largely alone.

Marriage

WE WERE SURPRISED to discover the strength of the marriage aspirations of today's college women. A very large proportion of both national survey respondents and on-campus interviewees (83 and 91 percent, respectively) agreed that "Being married is a very important goal for me." Yet, even though a large majority aspire to marriage, a substantial minority (29 percent) of the national survey respondents see a conflict between marriage and their short-term goals, agreeing that "When I look ahead five or ten years, it is hard to see how marriage fits in with my other plans." Still, more than half (52 percent) of these women who reported such a conflict said they would like to meet their future husband at college (which indicates some confusion and ambivalence concerning plans for marriage).

Most of the national survey respondents want, and expect, their marriages to last for life. In the national survey, 96 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that "If I marry I want my marriage to last for life." Only 0.3 percent of respondents did not agree with the statement. Furthermore, these women are highly optimistic about attaining their marital aspirations. Ninety-nine percent agreed (85 percent strongly) that "I believe that when the time is right I will find the right person to marry." A full 86 percent strongly agreed that "If I marry I expect my marriage to last for life," and only two percent did not agree with this statement.

Attitudes about Marriage

The very positive attitudes about marriage that most women in the national survey reported, and their general optimism overall, might provoke some legitimate concern about the meaning of the national survey responses. Are these simply responses given at the spur of the moment by people who lacked time to reflect on the questions? Or do they reflect an inflated sense of optimism by persons trying to conceal their own doubts or worries? There is no way to know for sure, but we did find in our on-campus interviews, which allowed for much more in-depth probing and explanation of issues, that women often expressed ambivalent feelings about marriage that the national survey did not capture. At the same time, when women did express skepticism about marriage, it was often accompanied by a longing for the kind of relationship that marriage itself entails.

For instance, in the on-campus interviews one student complained,

> *"[With] marriage...you have to debate everything... Why do you need a piece of paper to bond a person to you? ...But I know if I don't get married I'll probably feel like... [a] lonely old woman... If anything, I'd get married [because of] that."*

This student went on to say that she would be satisfied to live with a man, but added that, if the man was committed to her, he would offer to marry her, and that

36 A

this was the kind of commitment that she wanted. A student at the University of Washington said,

> *"I don't want to get married right after I graduate from college. I just think that would stunt my growth in every way that there is. I would like to be in a very steady, committed relationship with a guy."*

Although she felt that an early marriage would "stunt her growth," she did not elaborate on why a "very steady, committed relationship" would not.

Some of the interviewees were not at all ambivalent about marriage, and sometimes were quite articulate about the expected benefits of marriage. A senior at the University of Virginia reflected, "My parents have enjoyed being married so much. They are so very much in love, and just enjoy spending time with one another, that why wouldn't you want that?" A student at UC-Berkeley shared a rich vision, also based on observing her own parents, of how a good husband and a good wife support each other:

> *"A good husband is someone who cares about how his wife's day went, someone who wants to make her a better person, who loves her faults and her good qualities, who, if they have children, loves his children very much and dedicates much of his time to... their growing up and becoming good people... A good wife is someone... who loves her husband, who loves his faults, who dedicates herself to her children growing up. But yet who also spends time on herself, on making herself a better person, on contributing to society, on taking time to relax, [and] not just giving everything away so that there is nothing left for herself."*

Among the national survey respondents we found that interest in marriage and expressed degree of religiosity were rather strongly associated. Only seven percent of the "very religious" women said marriage was not an important goal for them, compared with 32 percent of the women who said they were "not religious at all." Several of the on-campus interviewees for whom marriage was an important goal made religious statements when they discussed marriage. A student at SUNY-Stony Brook said her commitment to her future husband will be "basically a commitment of service, love, mutual respect, [and] obviously mutual devotion to God." She went on to say,

> *"Some [people] say [to me] oh my goodness, you're going to serve your husband? They don't realize they're [already] serving people in probably a lot of bad ways....so [for me], it's how do I love my husband [and] how do I serve him?"*

Although it was more rare, some women we interviewed were unambiguously negative about marriage. Several of them made factual statements or used jargon that suggested they may have acquired support for this perspective in their college education. A student at UC-Berkeley stated, "Systemically marriages are kind of on the decline for as long as they last," and a junior at New York University said, "I

just don't think that getting married is an important part of [being in a relationship], [it's just] some ridiculous social construction." One woman at the University of Virginia, who appeared to be neutral about the possibility of marrying someday said,

> *"I'm in that sociology of the family class and it's just like got me really scared about marriage because [of] like all these things that have to go into a good marriage... We talk about... how many divorces there are, and just everything. So I would have to really think about it probably like three years or something before I even like considered getting married."*

Another student at the University of Virginia said,

> *"I took sociology and the family last semester and we learned the fact that parents are the most happy before they have children and after their kids go off to college. And I wanted to cry... Everybody [in the class] went home and called their mom that night... [and] my parents were like, that [research] is absolutely not true!"*

Attitudes about Cohabitation

In 1970, there was one cohabiting couple for every one hundred U.S. married couples. By 1997, there were eight cohabiting couples for every one hundred married couples. Today, about half of people aged thirty-five to thirty-nine in the U.S. have cohabited.[9] We asked women in our national survey and in our on-campus interviews what they thought about cohabitation. In the national survey, 58 percent of the respondents agreed that "It is a good idea to live with someone before deciding to marry him." This belief often coexists with a strong desire to marry, because it was embraced by 49 percent of the respondents who strongly agreed that marriage was a very important goal for them. This belief was rare only among the women who said they were very religious, only 17 percent of whom agreed.

Women we interviewed on campus reflected a similar range of attitudes about cohabitation. Some women thought that cohabitation was a good way to test whether one could spend a lifetime with a potential partner. In such cases, women often cited fears of divorce as the reason for trying cohabitation first. A senior at the University of Washington said,

> *"I kind of don't really see marriages work ever, so I want to make sure that everything's all right before [we get married]. I don't see how people can get married without living together because I know like I have a best friend and I live with her and we want to kill each other, like, every few months."*

Other women felt that, in an age of divorce, cohabitation was a preferable alternative to marriage. A student at New York University said, "You see so [many] people getting divorces... I just don't see the necessity [of marriage]." She went on to say, "I think that I don't have to be married to [the] person that I'm with.... You know like... Goldie Hawn [and Kurt Russell]? They're not married."

Other women in the on-campus interviews felt that cohabitation was not a good idea. A student at SUNY-Stony Brook said,

> *"Without marriage, just living together with somebody doesn't really work out, because you don't make compromises... When you're not married, you're not trying to work things out."*

Some women stated that their parents' attitudes about cohabitation influenced the likelihood that they themselves might consider cohabitation someday. When a student at Yale University was asked if she would consider living with a guy, she replied, "I don't think my parents believe in living together." A student at the University of Chicago clearly heard every word her mother had said about cohabitation:

> *"My mom... thinks if you're to the point [that] you can live with somebody, [then] you should be married to them. She's like really old-fashioned... She said living together and being married are two completely different things... and she was like throwing out statistics that... more people who live together get divorced than people [who don't]... [and] I'm like okay, all right... She was talking about like when... you're not married [you] feel like you could, you know, up and leave, I guess, at any moment. But when you're married you can't feel that way anymore... [she said] like you expect more because of that."*

Attitudes about Single Parent Childbearing

In our national survey we found that most respondents consider marriage a prerequisite for motherhood, for themselves if not for others. Only 12 percent of the survey respondents agreed, and 75 percent strongly disagreed, with the statement, "I would personally consider having a child out-of-wedlock."

In the on-campus interviews, women cited a variety of reasons for feeling that it was important to marry before having children. A freshman at the University of Chicago said, "I grew up in a family with two parents and my younger sister and I just feel like that was really stable. I would want my children... to have the same." A student at Yale University said she would marry before having children because, "I wouldn't want to raise a child alone... I just think that fathers are very important."

In the on-campus interviews, women frequently cited a somewhat different reason for why they would prefer to marry before having children. Several women said they wanted to enjoy time with their new husband without having children in the picture. A Colby College senior said, "I would like to get married first. So that I can enjoy my marriage. And then hopefully have children after." Another student said, "I would get married first... I would... want to have like a certain number of years where... it would just be me and my husband before children." Still another student agreed,

"I feel like marriage is like a whole learning experience in itself... that I kind of want to enjoy one on one with that person for a while before we start bringing children into the whole situation."

Some women in the on-campus interviews said that they did not think that marriage was necessary in order to have a child. A student at the University of Washington said, "I think that the only reason it's important [to get married before having children] is because of the way society looks at it, but I don't find it important. My parents weren't married when they had me and I turned out just fine." Another said marriage might be nice, but "if I got to a point in my life where I couldn't find Mr. Right to get married, then yes, I think I would have a kid." One student at UC-Berkeley simply said, "I like the idea of kids more than I like the idea of a husband."

Like the women mentioned earlier who said they wanted a very steady, committed relationship someday, but not necessarily a marriage, some women said that they did not feel that marriage was necessary to have a child, but that they did want to have an involved father in the picture. A student at New York University said,

"I may or may not be married [in ten years], but I would like to have a child... [Not being married and having kids is] okay... as long as I have a relationship with the father."

A student at Colby College agreed,

"The only thing I think is that it's important to have two supportive parents... I think if you make a commitment to have a child then you want to make sure that both people are willing [to be involved]... but I don't think marriage is necessary for that."

Attitudes about the College Pathways to Marriage

For most of our interviewees, all of whom were unmarried, talking about their aspirations and attitudes regarding marriage, cohabitation, and single parent childbearing might have seemed fairly abstract, since most were not planning to marry, move in with someone, or have a child in the very near future. However, when we asked women whether they thought that their college relationship experiences would lead to marriage, we discovered that this was a question about which many of them had given a great deal of thought.

Some women are not interested in meeting a future husband in college. In our national survey, 49 percent of women agreed, "At this time in my life I am not ready to be serious about romantic relationships." A student at the University of Washington said, "I think the goal at this point for most women my age is just to have a good time ...[and] maybe have a boyfriend." However, many women apparently feel that college is a good place to meet a future husband. In our national survey, 63 percent of women agreed that "I would like to meet my future husband at college," and 55 percent disagreed with the statement, "After I leave college it

will be easier to meet the right kind of guys." In our on-campus interviews a significant number of women told us that they thought college, in theory, should be a good place to meet a husband, but many also observed that it does not seem to be working out that way. A SUNY-Stony Brook student said, "College [is when] everyone says ... you meet your future husband, [but] I don't know if that's true for everyone." A Rutgers University student said, "I have yet to meet someone that I can ever even consider myself marrying... Everyone I talk to, [they say], 'Oh, you'll meet your husband in college.' I have definitely not." A senior at the University of Washington said,

> *"I guess when I realize [I am]... getting older...and a lot of people... meet their husbands in college... it's hard to see how I'm going to meet [people later], like this is a pretty big opportunity to meet people."*

A Colby College sophomore said,

> *"I would like to meet my husband here... But ... I don't really think that it will happen... A lot of [the guys] ... don't want relation[ships]. They either want little freshman girls... to hook up with [and it's] almost [about] the numbers... Some of them do want relationships but I think people are just a lot more immature than they were... in our parents' generation."*

Some women in or near their senior year noted that the possibility of meeting a future husband at college had begun to seem more pressing or unlikely. A University of Chicago senior said,

> *"It is definitely not going to happen at this school. My friends and I talk about this all the time... I do not think that I am going to find anyone here. I have been here for four years already."*

A UC-Berkeley senior said,

> *"When you are younger, junior, freshman, and maybe sophomore year ...you are probably not thinking as much about getting into serious relationships... But once you get older you start thinking about, do I want to... like marry a person from my college... so you start like being more serious in general."*

In general, college men tend to date women about their own age or younger, while women in college tend to date guys about their age or older. Therefore, as an overall demographic matter, women in their senior year tend to have a reduced pool of men from which to choose.

We also spoke to some women who felt that they already had met their future husband. A few students had been dating the same person through most of their years at college and were engaged to be married, while others were not engaged but they felt that their present relationship had the potential to lead to marriage. A senior at the University of Virginia said,

> *"I think [our relationship] is definitely something we plan to lead to marriage... I think we're a unique couple in that within the first couple*

months of us dating, even though we'd never talked about like marriage... he would comment... 'Oh, we'd have really cute children.'"

Another student at the University of Chicago told us that she had found her future husband but did not have family support for this decision. She said,

"I have found the ideal guy ... and I found him my freshman year... My mom said, 'I am not sure that you should say that because you have not had... [enough] dating experience'... [but] I have enough dating experience to know he is a really good match for me."

In the national survey a substantial minority (29 percent) of the respondents saw a conflict between marriage and their goals after college, agreeing that "When I look ahead five or ten years, it is hard to see how marriage fits in with my other plans." A number of women in the on-campus interviews shared their own experience with this conflict, wondering how marriage could fit in with their plans for graduate school, career, travel, and more.

A SUNY-Stony Brook student said,

"I don't know if [this current relationship] would [lead] to marriage, simply because I don't know if I'm staying in New York. It's actually a predicament I'm in right now because I'm thinking of going away for law school."

A Colby College senior who had just broken up with her boyfriend said,

"I don't really know what I want after college.... let's say, for instance, I wanted to go to another country to work or something after I graduate... if I were with him it would be a lot harder and I probably wouldn't do it because we were together."

A student at Howard University said,

"By the time I'm actually established and making the kind of money that I want to be making before I start a family I'll be in my early thirties. So I'm kind of confused about how marriage is going to fit into all of this."

Some women said that they feel the need to experience more of life and relationships before they could consider marrying. A Colby College student, whose own parents had met at that school and married, said,

"I never... in a million years picture myself meeting somebody here.... I don't feel like I've had enough experiences to be able to meet somebody now that I know for sure [I would be able to marry]... I feel like I need to have a lot more, I think, encounters before I really find someone."

A Howard University student said, "The current relationship I am in now I can see us being married, but it would definitely be probably ten years before we are married." A student at UC-Berkeley said that she has a boyfriend and they have discussed marriage, but "depending on where we go in life... that could change."

Some women had confronted this question and come up with some alternative ways of coping. A student at the University of Chicago said, "I want to meet my

husband in law school." A student at the University of Michigan, when asked if she could see herself marrying her current boyfriend, said,

> *"No way... I don't see myself dating him for ten years and then marrying him... But... maybe like dating him, breaking up for ten years and then getting married."*

Although most women seemed to feel that the opportunities and stresses of post-collegiate life made marriage difficult to consider, a few saw the uncertainty and possibility in these years as the very reason to be married. A student at the University of Virginia said,

> *"Like I want, when I graduate, to start out my life if possible with the person I'm going to be with... it would be fun and exciting... where I'm with like my husband and we're both starting out on our careers kind of together so we can go through that together."*

Another student at Howard University, when asked why she wanted to be married, replied, "Just because life is hard and you need somebody to come home to."

Children of Divorce: High Hopes and Few Models

THE WOMEN we interviewed were born between about 1978 and 1982. They grew up in an era of widespread divorce and are coming of age at a time when, due to divorce and single parent childbearing, it has become more common for children to spend at least part of their childhood without an intact family than with one. For this reason, whenever we ask questions about the experience of young adults, we have to ask whether divorce is shaping some of our findings. Previous studies have documented that parental divorce can have a significant impact on how young people think about the opposite sex, commitment, and marriage.[10] Therefore, we decided to ask whether women in our sample who are children of divorce differ from women from intact families in their courtship attitudes, values, and practices and, if so, how.

In the national survey 25 percent of respondents said that their parents were divorced or separated. In the on-campus interviews one in five of the respondents had parents who were divorced or separated.[11]

Hooking Up, Dating, and Boyfriends

Women from divorced families were somewhat more likely than women from intact families to have hooked up, and if they did hook up they were more likely to have done so more frequently. In our national survey 35 percent of women from intact families reported having hooked up at least once in college, compared to 42 percent of women from divorced families. Of women who had hooked up at least once, 37 percent of women from divorced families said they hooked up more than six times, compared to 23 percent of women from intact families. The women from divorced families were also more likely to be sexually active, a finding consistent with other surveys. Seventy percent of these women reported having had sexual intercourse, compared with 53 percent of women from intact families. Since coming to college 69 percent of women from divorced families reported having a boyfriend, compared to 59 percent of women from intact families.

Marriage

While women from divorced families have seen their own parents' marriages fail, 79 percent of them still agree that "Being married is a very important goal for me," compared to 87 percent of women from intact families.

In our on-campus interviews, we found that women from divorced families are quite open to the idea of marrying, and sometimes even eager to marry. A Colby College freshman from a divorced family said that a lasting marriage "is like my goal in life" and that she would like to be married and have children now, if it was socially acceptable. A University of Virginia student from a divorced family, when asked if she would like to be married, replied, "Oh, yeah, definitely," and a SUNY-

Stony Brook student said, "It's like a dream of mine." Several of the women from divorced families were lukewarm about marriage — with statements such as "if it happens, it happens" — but nevertheless remained open to it. None of the on-campus interviewees from divorced families said that they did not intend to marry.

In contrast, when we asked women from intact families if they would like to be married, they were often quick to note that they plan to wait a long time before getting married, or that they are not especially eager to marry, and in some cases that they are against the idea of marrying. The women from intact families seldom described marriage in terms of a goal or a dream, as the women from divorced families did. One SUNY-Stony Brook student said she would like to get married because "I just like to be around people." An observant Christian at Howard University expected to marry because, "I feel like there is a person, a guy, that is out there for me so it's part of His whole plan for me." Other women from intact families were open to marrying but often noted that they did not wish to marry anytime soon, responding with statements such as "I'm a little too young to be thinking about marriage" and "I'm not really thinking about that now." Others from intact families said that they did not feel they had gained enough experiences with other people to consider marrying. One wanted to marry late because her own parents had married late. Another said she would marry after establishing her career. One student did not address the question because she tries "not to plan ahead." Two others, from the University of Chicago and Yale University, were fairly certain they would not marry and said, "I truly don't see myself being married" and "I don't necessarily want to be married," one of them adding there is "just something about being married that just seems constricting."

WHY ARE THE WOMEN from divorced families in the national survey slightly less likely to agree with the statement "Being married is a very important goal for me" (79 percent versus 87 percent from intact families) while sounding more eager and open to marriage in the on-campus interviews? This discrepancy may exist because many women from divorced families appear to view marriage as a question looming in the near future, one fraught with both promise and deep uncertainty, while women from intact families seem to view marriage in a more detached way, as something that will happen when they are ready, but not anytime soon.

Indeed, while the women from intact families were generally less enthusiastic about marrying someday, they were somewhat more certain that when they did marry, the marriage would endure. In the on-campus interviews all of the women were asked, "If you marry, do you expect your marriage to last for a lifetime?" The women from intact families frequently gave short, straightforward replies such as, "Definitely, yeah always," "I expect to, yeah," and "Yes, I do." A University of Chicago student said, "When I marry, yes, I hope that it will be for life and I will be sure when I do this that is the person for me and then it will work." A Howard University student said, "Yes, I do... because if it's the person I am supposed to be

married to, there would be no reason for me to leave him or him leave me." Only a few expressed doubts or reservations. A student at the University of Chicago from an intact family said,

> *"Definitely if I was going to bring children into the world, I would be married to somebody that I thought there was no chance of me divorcing... I just have too many friends that have been hurt by their parents' divorces that I definitely do not want to subject a kid to that."*

In contrast, the hesitancy found in this last reply can be detected in almost all of the responses by women from divorced families, whose replies are noteworthy for their frequent use of words such as "hope" and "want" and their references to both their parents' divorce and the current divorce rate. In response to the question, "If you marry, do you expect your marriage to last for a lifetime?" one woman at Rutgers University whose parents had divorced said, "Hopefully. From what I've seen it looks doubtful." Another said, "Yeah, well I would hope so. I know like 55 percent of marriages fail, but I hope I'm going to be one of the [lasting marriage] statistics." Two others at the University of Virginia and Colby College, said, "Yeah, I want to," and "Oh yes, I would hope that it would be for life." A student at the University of Washington said, "I would like to say that I wouldn't get married unless I expected that." Another said, "I hope so. I really do. I saw what happened to my mom...." While the women from divorced families frequently sound more enthusiastic about marrying some day, and sound as though they may want to marry sooner than women from intact families, at the same time they show a great deal of hesitancy about their future marriage and its potential to last. When we examine the data from our national survey, this small but important difference persists. In the survey, 92 percent of women from intact families strongly agreed that "If I marry, I expect my marriage to last for life" compared to 82 percent of women from divorced families.

When it comes to cohabitation, other studies have found, and this survey confirms, that women from divorced families are more likely to view cohabitation as a wise choice. In our national survey, 16 percent of women from intact families and 34 percent of women from divorced families strongly agreed with the statement "It is a good idea to live with someone before deciding to marry him." Overall, 49 percent of women from intact families either strongly or somewhat agreed with this statement, while 65 percent of women from divorced families either strongly or somewhat agreed.

Advice from Parents

We asked these women if there was someone in their family whose relationship they really admire. In the national survey, 77 percent of the women from intact families strongly agreed there was a relationship in their family that they admired, compared to only 46 percent of women from divorced families. Even more reveal-

ing, while only eight percent of women from intact families disagreed with this statement, 33 percent of women from divorced families disagreed with it.

In the on-campus interviews, a majority of the women from intact families said without hesitation that they admired their parents' relationships. When asked why, these women often spoke eloquently and affectionately about their mothers and fathers, describing how they enjoyed one another and how they had stuck together through two or three decades of marriage. A Colby College senior said,

> *"My friends and my boyfriend have said... you can just tell [my parents are] so much in love with each other, just the way they care about each other so much in everything they do."*

Another Colby College student said, "I admire my parents... because they've been married for twenty-five years... and luckily they've been able to grow and change together." A student at the University of Chicago said she admires her parents' relationship because, "they are good about communicating to each other and, when they are not [good about it], my mom is able or my dad is able to just step back and kind of leave the scene and then come back and be more calm."

One woman at Howard University, who told the interviewer she wants to be "cherished" by her future husband the way her father cherishes her mother, described her parents' marriage in this way:

> *"I know [my parents] have problems... I know there have been times when my mom's wanted to leave. There's been times when my dad's wanted to leave. But because they made that commitment to each other... every day, no matter how hard things were or what the problems were, [they chose] to stay in that marriage and to choose to love each other... And to me that's the thing.... Now it's like they've gone through so many things. They've been married almost twenty-five years. Now it's getting to the part where it's like everything is so wonderful because they put in all that work... so now it can be wonderful."*

The responses of women from divorced families were quite different. None of these women cited their parents' former marriage as a relationship that they admired, nor did they cite the current marriage of a parent with a stepparent. Well over half of the women from divorced families said there was no relationship at all in their family that they admired. One replied, "No, my parents are divorced, so...." The interviewer probed, "No others?" and the woman replied, "No, not that I can think of." A student at the University of Washington from a divorced family said,

> *"I only know of one couple, my grandparents, [they] are the only people that have ever stayed married... Like any of my friend's parents, anybody that's been married longer... they've had you know two or three wives before they found the right one... [and] I think that's stupid."*

Two women from divorced families said they admired their grandparents' relationships. One said of her grandparents,

"They adored each other, basically... My grandfather would wake up early in the morning, cook my grandmother breakfast and do things like that, and my grandmother is like... make sure you have your sweater on, you know, always taking care of his health...."

Two women referred to the marriage of an aunt and uncle. One said, "[My aunt and uncle] make fun of each other and they joke, but I can tell... they really love each other and care about each other." When the interviewer asked her, "Do you feel you can have that?" the woman replied, "I want to. I think seeing what my parents went through... I know what I don't want." One student at Rutgers University referred to her friend's parents' marriage: "They just seem so in love. I hear them talking about each other. They have so many nice things to say about each other... that's what I want." Another woman from a divorced family said that the only relationship she admired was her own relationship with her boyfriend. We also asked women how close they are to their parents and, in particular, if they feel they can go to their parents for advice about relationships.

About half of the women from intact families said that they were close to their mothers and went to them for advice about relationships. A number of these women also mentioned their close relationships with their fathers. One woman said she goes to her father for advice because she is closer to him. A student at Yale University said that each of her parents offers her something different when it comes to advice:

"I ask my parents, I ask my dad...My mom... she'll give me like immediate answers... and my dad is much more like long-term, like my dad thinks in much bigger strokes. So I talk to him about like what do you think about this relationship as a whole? And my mom, I'll be like what do you think I should do tomorrow?"

Several women reported that they learned about guys and relationships not so much by talking with their parents, but by observing them. One woman said her ideas come "probably mostly from my parents and seeing the way my dad treats my mom...." A SUNY-Stony Brook student said she learns, "just from [my parents'] example and just like subtle hints." A University of Michigan student said her ideas come "probably [from] my parents more than anything. They never gave me rules but I think... I saw by their example."

Only two of the women from intact families said they never went to their parents for advice. One of these women had immigrated with her family from Russia five years ago. She thought of her parents as "living in a different time." The other woman came from an intact family but her father had died when she was fourteen years old. She said,

"I don't really go to anybody for advice... I don't talk to my mother about it, I just talk to my friends. I mean, my mother is dating right now and... she comes to me for advice."

When the same question, "Whose advice have you taken in the past about guys?" was asked of women from divorced families, many of them spoke about their mothers, and some spoke quite passionately about them. However, conspicuously absent in their responses were references to their fathers. Nor did they refer in general terms to their parents as a unit, or cite their parents as a positive example. If anything, their parents presented an example of what they did not want.

Some women from divorced families had lukewarm assessments of the degree to which they seek their mothers' advice. One student at Rutgers University said, "I think [I get advice] mostly from friends. I think a little bit from my parents." The interviewer asked her, "Your mom or your dad?" and she replied, "Mostly my mom. I mean, she's really young and so I listen to her." Another agreed that she takes her mother's advice on certain things but goes mostly to her friends.

Other women had very positive assessments of their relationships with their mothers. One University of Virginia student said, "[My mom] raised me very well... and so I think about her as like my role model." Several women said they were exceptionally close to their mothers. One woman said that she is "very open" with her mother, and said, "I don't know anyone who is closer to their mother as I am to my mom." A second woman replied, "My mom is my best friend... There is not a thing in my life that she doesn't know about." In answer to another, earlier question ("What is love?") this same woman said, "There is the love that I feel for my mom, which is never dying. I love my mom so incredibly much.... She is my strength. She is everything." Another woman appeared to be very close to her mother and to talk frequently with her about relationships, but more as peers. She said, "Oh yeah, I always bitch to my mom... she always bitches about her boyfriends, so...." Only one woman noted going to a stepparent for advice: "My dad I don't really talk to any more. But my stepdad... I think of him as my father."

ALTHOUGH A LITTLE MORE than half of the women from divorced families had relationships with their mothers that ranged from reasonably close to very close, a number of the women from divorced families had no parent — mom or dad — to whom they felt they could turn for advice. A Colby College freshman observed, "I had more of a hands-off relationship, I think, with my parents." A student at the University of Washington said that she gets advice and ideas from friends and "definitely not my parents." Another woman remarked that her mom does not seem interested in talking about these issues, and she senses that this disinterest is because her mom is afraid that her daughter will question her mother's past choices. One woman from an intact family observed, "A lot of people that I know have come from divorced families, and it sort of split them up and they don't like this parent or they have no respect for that parent." Another student, whose parents are currently divorcing, said, "My dad's become a pretty big source [of advice] lately with what's happened between him and my mom. I've kind of cut off my rela-

tionship with my mother." Another woman whose parents are currently divorcing replied, "No, I never ask my parents," and went on,

> *"Oh Jesus, my parents are getting divorced after like 30 years... I don't have to ask my parents for their advice or to learn from them. I just have to watch them. It was so horrible. My dad has been ditching alimony court for months... So I definitely don't want to be them...."*

Overall, the women from intact families seem to have a fairly balanced and often affectionate appraisal of their parents. Except for the recent immigrant and the woman whose father had died, all of them tend to go to their parents for advice. A number of them are as likely to go to dad as to mom, and several stated that they learn as much from their parents' example as by their words. They sound relaxed when they talk about their parents, as if they are stating some simple facts for the interviewer's benefit. The women from divorced families often sounded more heated and extreme. In some cases, they are passionately devoted to their mothers. In other cases, they feel completely distant from both parents. And very few of them consider their father, if he is still in their life, someone in whom to confide or to consult for advice.

Based on other data in our survey, it appears that there might be a relationship between the finding that women from divorced families, on the one hand, get less advice from their parents and, on the other hand, are more likely to participate in the hook up culture and to have had sexual intercourse. In the national survey, 77 percent of women from intact families agreed with the statement, "My parents have told me I should save sex for marriage," compared to 65 percent of women from divorced families. In addition, 87 percent of women from intact families agreed with the statement, "I was raised with firm expectations about relationships with guys," compared to 72 percent of women from divorced families.

Independence and Dependence

Women from divorced families are much more likely than women from intact families to cite and praise one personal quality that they believe is important in relationships. This quality is independence.

One woman with divorced parents said in ten years she would like to be "Self-sufficient. That's probably the most important thing to me, that I don't have to rely on anyone...." Another woman said that a good wife is "independent." She said it is acceptable for a woman to be at home when the children were young, but when they are older she should "go off, go to work. I think it's better for the marriage in general, because the husband doesn't feel like you're clinging to him for financial support." This way, too, the woman knows "I can leave, I don't have to put up with nonsense."

Some women from divorced families talked about the fear that dependence provokes. One woman told the interviewer that she has a "fear of commitment," to the extent that for the first few months of her current relationship she insisted that her

boyfriend call their liaison "a relationship without a title." Refusing to call a guy her boyfriend, she said, helps her to feel that she is "not as dependent on that person because by nature I am very independent. And for me to say boyfriend and be completely committed to that person makes me almost nervous." One woman whose parents never married, in explaining how she had gradually come around to the idea of marrying someday, recalled:

> *"Most of the women in my family are either divorced or are single mothers and as a result they were very strong and independent women. For me, that kind of translated into the idea that we do not need men. We can do without them. Sure, it would be great to have them around. They bring in an extra source of income, but you can do it on your own. So being married to a man just kind of stifled you and it seemed like it would have been very confining and very constraining and a lot of that is what scared me."*

Few of the women from intact families mentioned the ideal of independence. One said her father encourages her to be a doctor "so that when... you marry a guy [you can] stay with him because you love him and not because you need him... financially." Another who spoke about independence came from an intact family, but her father had died when she was fourteen. After her father's death, her mother spent a lot of her time with divorced women friends. She observed:

> *"My mother's alone, my roommate's mother's alone, my best friend's mother's alone, my boyfriend's mother is alone, and it's hard for them to meet guys, and it's hard for them to go out there once they're 40, after taking a break from their own careers... to start over again, because they have to make money. So they, our mothers, have instilled in us the desire to be independent."*

At the same time, this woman felt "really conflicted" because:

> *"All of us, me and my friends, want families. A lot of us grew up with station wagon driving mothers... We actually appreciate it and we love that, and a lot of us want to be that... but that's conflicted with really wanting to be independent [because] while we had station wagon driving mothers, I guess we had been alienated by our fathers on some level... and I'd say 80 percent of my friends are divorced and in most cases the mothers have been in litigation for years... and we've resented the fact that our mothers aren't more independent... and even me, I've never been through a divorce, but seeing friends, I feel conflicted over that, so we want both and it's hard."*

This woman has clearly absorbed the experience of her friends from divorced families, and her explanation of the struggle between perceived notions of independence and dependence resonates with the statements made by a number of women from divorced families. Women from divorced families, when compared to their peers, seem much more intent on obtaining and protecting their independence in present and future relationships.

A Culture of Divorce

Women from divorced families hope to get married someday, yet they clearly feel that they carry the burden of their own parents' divorces. They have felt the painful fallout from a failed marriage and are all too aware that it could happen again. At the same time, some women from intact families also doubt their ability to have a lifelong marriage. Some scholars argue that today we are not simply witnessing a high rate of divorce but are living in a "divorce culture." The divorce culture arose when shifts in attitudes about the importance of lasting marriage began to have an impact on *everyone's* marriage. In a divorce-oriented culture, then, not only are troubled marriages more likely to end in divorce, but more marriages are likely to become troubled. The authors of one study report: "The belief that an unrewarding marriage should be jettisoned may lead some people to invest less time in their marriages and make fewer attempts to resolve marital disagreements." They conclude: "By adopting attitudes that provide greater freedom to leave unsatisfying marriages, people may be increasing the likelihood that their marriages will become unsatisfying in the long run."[12]

When the interviewee from an intact family says, "I would really like to be married for life like my parents have been, but I am not going to rule out getting a divorce or anything if for some reason I make a stupid decision," she may in fact be increasing her chance of divorce by decreasing the likelihood that she will seek to resolve problems in the marriage rather than resort to divorce. In a divorce culture, everyone becomes more vulnerable to divorce, even those who did not witness divorce in their own families.

Yet the responses from our interviewees also tell us how important a strong marriage can be not only for one's own children, but for one's grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and even other young people in the community. When women in this study could not cite their own parents' marriage as one they admired, they often cited the marriages of their grandparents, aunts and uncles, or, in some cases, the parents of their friends.

In recent decades, the idea that strong marriages form the basis of a strong society has come to be challenged. Many have argued instead that marriages are essentially private arrangements that should be basically free from review or oversight by other people or other institutions of society. Yet these interviews show us that marriages take place not in a vacuum, but in a network of relationships, including relationships involving young people who are paying attention, and who are strongly influenced by what they see.

Should 'Grown Ups' Care About the Mating of the Young?

THERE ARE FEW recognizable features of courtship on contemporary college campuses — few widely recognized norms, rituals, or relationship milestones through which young men and women can signal to one another their interest in meeting, getting to know each other better, establishing a committed relationship, or considering one another as future marriage partners. It appears that some women want to be "friends" first with guys as a way partially to recreate the "shopping around" experience that earlier forms of dating allowed, but what male and female "friends" can or should expect of each other is often as unclear as what should follow after a hook up, or when a date is officially a date, or when two people who hook up often are actually a couple.

The only clear milestone we heard about by which two people will know they are a couple is when they have "the talk" or "the conversation," an activity that is usually initiated by the woman. Further, when women and men do become a couple today, too often it appears to be what sociologists call a "premature entanglement," or what we are calling "joined at the hip." In these relationships, the couple forms an exclusive bond before they have been able to explore alternatives to the relationship or to test their own desirability to others. And while these relationships may often be characterized by affection and love, they move so quickly that the couple can soon reach a point where they wonder if they are missing something on the hooking up and hanging out scene, or they become so serious that often they feel that their only alternative is to break up.

Although 88 percent of women in the national survey reported that, in general, they are happy with the social scene on their campus, we found that our on-campus respondents, at the same time, often expressed confusion and frustration with the lack of clarity surrounding mating and dating at their schools. If, as we found, 83 percent of women in the national survey agree that "Being married is a very important goal for me," and 63 percent agree, "I would like to meet my future husband at college," then there is a clear conflict between their hopes for marriage and the possibilities offered by the hooking up and hanging out scene on their campuses. And, as several of them stressed in the on-campus interviews, their college years are probably the only time in their lives that they will be surrounded by as many unmarried men of their own age with whom they share similar interests, experiences, and aspirations.

One of the historical features of courtship was that parents and other older adults were actively involved in overseeing and guiding the social lives of their daughters and the young men who expressed interest in them. Throughout history the mating of young adults has rarely if ever occurred in a vacuum, but instead has taken place in a thick nexus of social relations that included older adults who helped to influence young people toward good marital choices. Yet today, it appears that

older adults, including college administrators and social leaders who have access to the young through education, media, health professions, and more, seem largely to have withdrawn from this role. Indeed, while this generation of older adults is willing to pass on information in the interest of protecting young people's physical health, it is largely and curiously silent when it comes to the deeper questions of love, commitment, and marriage.

If there are any older adults seeking to assist young people in thinking through these issues, it is their parents. In our national survey, we found that 78 percent of the respondents agreed, "I was raised with firm expectations about relationships with guys," and 71 percent agreed, "My parents have told me I should save sex for marriage." In addition, at an age at which peer influence is strong, more than half (53 percent) agreed, "My parents have more influence than my friends on how I think about relationships with men."

At the same time, many parents appear to urge their young adult daughters to delay marriage as long as possible, and no one, parents or others, seems to offer much advice to these young women about what they should do about relationships with men in the meantime, or when the right time for marriage might be. In addition, most college women leave their parents' homes and make new lives for themselves on or near a college campus that has its own set of social arrangements and a distinctive campus culture. Whether or not they realize it, the decisions that college administrators and others make have a strong role to play in shaping a campus culture and thus helping to determine the environment in which young women and men meet and mate and perhaps consider marriage. In order to illustrate this point, we look at the example of coed dorms, which are institutional arrangements of space — put in place by college administrations — that appear clearly to support the hook up culture as well as some of the other more noticeable features of contemporary campus social life.

COED DORMS provide an excellent case study of how the administration-created arrangement of physical space on a campus can help to sustain a particular kind of campus sexual culture. In this case, coed dorms seem inextricably related to two defining features of campus life: hooking up, and its flip side, joining at the hip. These dorms also appear to facilitate other aspects of campus life that some women find by turns disappointing, frustrating, and sometimes frightening.

Coed dorms emerged as a common feature of campus life only in the last few decades. In the past, one of the most noticeable features of *in loco parentis* was the predominance of separate dorms for women and men and rules and curfews for women that were usually stricter than those set for men. The widespread social changes of the 1960s brought about many reorganizations of social life among the young, and among these was the decline of *in loco parentis* at most colleges. In a

recent article in *Rolling Stone*, a Wellesley College graduate of 1971 recalls how quickly the changes occurred:

> *"When I arrived in '67, men could be in the rooms just for an hour or two in the afternoon — and you had to have a box of matches in the door — and we had sit-down meals, where we had to sing hymns and get dressed up on the weekends, and have tea once a week... By my senior year, in '71, men could be in the rooms twenty-four hours; there were no more sit-down dinners, no more singing of hymns, and I think they might have had tea once a month."*[13]

For this study we did not set out to investigate coed dorms. Our qualitative interview questionnaire contained no questions about coed dorms. But as the interviews progressed, we noticed that the students themselves frequently mentioned them. For this reason, in our national survey we included a statement, "Coed dorms are a good idea," and found that 86 percent of respondents agreed with it. Some of our on-campus respondents stated that coed dorms were fun. But many also stated that fun was not the reason that the administration supported them. Instead, they felt that college administrators instituted coed dorms in order to provide students with a "real world" experience in which they must learn to live with members of the opposite sex.

We found that if we asked women to talk about coed dorms in the abstract, they had few critiques and, on the contrary, tended to speak positively about these arrangements. However, if we asked women to talk about the details of their lives and relationships, coed dorms frequently came up, and in a much less positive light.

One of the themes that emerged is that the close proximity of women and men that coed dorms facilitate seems to take the mystery out of male-female interactions and, at the same time, contribute to the passivity that some women in our interviews had noted about men. A number of women said that the primary place in which women and men meet each other is in the dorms. A Howard University junior told us that women meet men "definitely in the dorms and such, if you live in a coed dorm," and a University of Michigan senior said, "Most of the guys I know are guys that live around me." A University of Washington student said,

> *"The doors in our dorms are always open and you can just like wander in there and just kind of hang out... [Dating is] not so nerve wracking now I guess, because you don't have to make the effort to drive to someone's house and like pick them up."*

Another student at the University of Washington had difficulty imagining meeting guys anywhere but her dorm, saying, "Once you've kind of exhausted the... supply of guys in your dorm, then it's like where do you go? You'd have to bug people in class or go to a different floor."

Many adults who are not intimately familiar with college campuses might not realize just how close together women and men in coed dorms actually live. When a

freshman at the University of Chicago mentioned coed living arrangements, the interviewer asked, "There are separate bathrooms, though, [for] female and male?" and the student replied,

> *"They are coed except for the showers. The showers are supposed to be single sex.... So yes, you always run into everybody in the bathroom. It is like my one friend, usually the one place that I see him is in the bathroom."*

A freshman at Colby College said,

> *"We don't share bathrooms, but I mean, sometimes there's like overlap... because we only have the men's bathrooms on our floor so sometimes [I]'ll go in there and wash my dishes or something."*

She elaborated:

> *"[I think] the ideal would be to have separate dorms like for women and men. Because I think that we become too comfortable around each other, honestly. And guys are just gross... like... it's almost as if they're our brothers, which is not a good thing.... you immediately rule out people because you see the... comfortable side of them... before you get... their good side."*

If the dorms were single sex, she said, "the guys would actually be forced to... go out and find girls that they like... and to see them and say 'Well, I don't really know her, but I'll just call her up and like pursue this... because I'm a guy and that's my job.'"

A junior at Wellesley College interviewed for *Rolling Stone* said,

> *"I find that the fact that our school is single-sex makes it more of a traditional dating experience. The guy comes to my school, he comes to my door, he picks me up, he takes me out, he makes a real effort to get here."*[14]

If there has been a decline in male initiative on many campuses when it comes to mating and dating, as we believe has occurred, the close proximity of men and women in the dorms may offer part of the explanation.

At the same time, many women said that coed dorms also contribute to a very different kind of male-female interaction, which is the fast moving "joined at the hip" relationship. The University of Chicago has a tightly organized "house" system in which the sometimes large dorm buildings are organized into floors, or "houses," in which 60 or so students live, eat, and do most of their socializing together. A junior at the school said,

> *"A lot of people dated people in their dorms — [we call it] 'housecest.' And then those people seem to be together for like ever. Like they'll be the highest rate of people getting married."*

Another student at the school said,

> *"While my boyfriend and I were dating, we saw each other every day. It was very much like living with someone. You know, you do dishes together and you eat meals together."*

At other schools, too, women noted that having a boyfriend who lives in your dorm seems to foster a relationship that has a high degree of "face time." A Rutgers University student said that in a coed dorm:

> *"As far as relationships go it's double time... In high school... you used to see your boyfriend on the weekend... now [in college] you live with your boyfriend... eventually if you are monogamous he sleeps over one night, then you sleep at his place, and vice versa. It's kind of like now you're living with him. And if you live in the same dorm... then you're constantly seeing him and you're constantly forced to deal with him... it has its ups and downs, because you don't really have your space...you feel like you've been with the person a lot longer than you have."*

A student at the University of Washington agreed:

> *"This is a common complaint because... [when] you're in a [coed] house... you're together [with your boyfriend] all the time... [and] if you date someone else in your house... [then] you're kind of off-limits to everyone else... I kind of wish in some ways that I hadn't dated within my house just because it would have forced me to get out on campus more and meet more people."*

Several of these women also reported that, if couples want to break up, it is much more difficult to do so when they live in the same dorm. The same University of Washington student said,

> *"The only place I've ever met guys here has been in my dorm which has caused kind of a problem, because if you break up or something happens, it's kind of awkward."*

Another University of Washington student observed, "Intra-house dating... I think it's basically a bad idea now, [it] works at the beginning of the year, but I [have seen] some really messy breakups." A student at the University of Chicago said, "I could cite five examples of couples on these two floors... who broke up and got back together, including myself." She explained that this was because "of the pressures of the way the house system is. In fact it convinced me that I never want to live with someone unless I plan to marry them because you are so confined by living with a person into making relationship decisions that you might otherwise have made differently." It is worth noting that when these women speak of having a relationship with a guy who lives in their dorm, they frequently use the term "living together." Of course, if these students lived anywhere other than in a dorm and said that they "lived together," they would fall into the category of a cohabiting couple.

A few women reported feeling unsafe in a coed dorm. A commuter student who was a senior at SUNY-Stony Brook said,

> *"In a dorm when you have guys living right across the hallway, it's a very vulnerable situation... if you don't lock your door... [and] girls are worried about those kinds of things... I stayed with my friend [on campus] a*

lot and it's always, lock the door, make sure the door is locked, because anybody could just walk in... there are guys roaming up and down the hallway, and you don't know, like who they are or what they're going to do."

Finally, coed dorms almost certainly provide a no-holds-barred setting for the hook up scene. A University of Michigan sophomore said, "[People] hook up. Like just randomly... especially in dorms because there's so many different people here." A Rutgers University student noted,

"Especially in the dorms I think [hooking up] was huge... it was so easy to come back to your dorm, and everyone's there at two or three in the morning. Everyone's come back, everyone's intoxicated."

A senior at the University of Washington said,

"[Hooking up happens] in the dorms... that's pretty obvious, because everybody lives together and everybody's drunk all the time."

At Rutgers University a student reported that in college:

"You have the choice to go out every night if you want to go out. You have the choice to, you know, spend the night. I mean, you live in coed dorms. You have the choice to go spend the night next door, you know?"

Some dorms in particular seem to get a reputation for having a lot of drinking and hooking up. At New York University, a junior said that her freshman dorm,

"[Was] a madhouse... I had to move halfway through my first semester because it was like a nonstop party, 24 hours a day. People would like bang on my door at 3 o'clock and be drunk... My roommate would come home every night, totally wasted. I'd have to put her to bed."

At the University of Chicago a freshman noted,

"I live in [a certain house] and about three years ago [it] was notorious for being the house that had hook ups and housecest relationships, the drinking house. We had this horrible reputation."

Since this research project did not initially set out to investigate coed dorms, the only representative finding we have is that 86 percent of college women agree, "Coed dorms are a good idea." At the same time, evidence from our qualitative interviews suggests that the relationship between coed dorms and the hook up culture would at least be worth investigating in future research, for instance by comparing the prevalence of hooking up on-campuses that have coed dorms and those that do not. In the meantime, we suggest that coed dorms may at least play a role in the decline of male initiative, the reduction of romance-inspiring mystery between college women and men, the presence and persistence of "joined at the hip" relationships, and the prevalence of hooking up, as well as the feeling of vulnerability that some women report from living in close proximity to unknown men.

Further, we might again raise the question of why coed dorms exist in the first place. Students report that they think administrators institute coed dorms in order

to give students a "real world" experience. Yet unless students plan to enter the military or perhaps a kibbutz, it is unlikely that they will ever live in such close and intimate proximity with such a large number of unrelated, unmarried persons of the opposite sex. If coed dorms offer "real life" training, it appears to be an early training in hooking up and cohabitation, but little else.

We suspect that there may be at least one different and more practical reason why many college administrators favor coed dorms. We learned of one case in which an all-male dorm had for several years been trashed by partying young men. Finally, the administration decided to put a stop to it, and made the dorm coed. Given that dorm damage is a problem on many campuses, consuming large portions of the housing office budget, causing disciplinary problems and raising the ire of parents, custodial staff, and neighbors of the college, administrators have a clear incentive to seek arrangements that will reduce the likelihood of dorm damage. In the case we learned about, the housing office rationale for making a formerly all-male dorm coed is that, when women live with men, their presence helps to keep the men from engaging in literally destructive behavior. Yet we might ask why college women, who are attending college to advance their own education and careers, are put in the position of being unpaid, unacknowledged monitors of young men?

Coed dorms provide a useful example of how college administrative decisions – and decisions made by other societal leaders — can have a profound impact on the culture in which young women and men interact and form relationships. A University of Chicago student said that when she arrived at the school, "My parents found out that I was going to be living in a coed dorm and my dad said, 'I was not told. I do not approve,' and I was like, 'What?'" She went on to say,

> *"He had thought that coed dormitories contribute to casual sex. I think that the relationship is actually the opposite. I think the dormitories really contribute to non-casual sex... [because] it is difficult to break up with a person you see everyday."*

In this case, based on our observations, it appears that both father and daughter are right.

COLLEGE WOMEN want to be married someday and they have high aspirations for marriage. At the same time, they come of age in an environment that lacks a culture of courtship, that lacks broadly recognized social practices and norms that help them to place their present desires and experiences in the context of their future marriages. Hooking up, hanging out, and joining at the hip are logical, if flawed, responses to this major cultural absence.

How should we as a society respond to this situation? In some instances, such as (in our view) coed dorms, the current decisions of the "grown ups" may be doing more harm than good. More generally and positively, however, we believe

that the case for more involvement of older adults in the dating and mating of the young — involvement that is more knowledgeable, more authoritative, and more sensitive — is clear and compelling. We do these young women no favors by letting them sort out the pathway to intimacy and marriage alone.

Photograph at left by Raina Sacks Blankenhorn. Used with permission.

Recommendations

1. Recognize that older adults, including parents, college administrators, and other social leaders, should have important roles in guiding the courting and mating practices of the young. The virtual disappearance of adult participation in, or even awareness of, how today's young people find and marry one another should be seen as a major social problem, and should end.

2. Recognize that college women typically do not yearn for a series of "close relationships," but instead the majority seek long-term commitment and marriage.

3. There appears to have been a reduction in male initiative in dating on college campuses. Recognize that the burden of dating and mating should not fall on women alone, and that there is a need for greater male initiative.

4. Support the creation of socially prescribed rules and norms that are relevant to and appropriate for this generation, and that can guide young people with much more sensitivity and support toward the marriages they seek. When it comes to inherently social acts such as romance and marriage, social rules do more than restrict individual choice, they also facilitate it. The absence of appropriately updated social norms, rituals, and relationship milestones leaves many young women confused, and often disempowered, in their relationships with men. Socially defined courtship is an important pathway to more successful marriages. □

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Endnotes

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3. Norval D. Glenn and Patricia Taylor. 1984. "Education and Family Income: A Comparison of Married White Males and Females in the United States." *Social Forces* 63 (September): 169-183.

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8. Amy Kass. 1999. "A Case for Courtship." Working Paper 73. (New York, NY: Institute for American Values): 3-4, 24.

9. Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher. 2000. *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financially* (New York: Doubleday): 36-37.

10. These studies include: Judith Wallerstein, Julia Lewis, and Sandra Blakeslee. 2000. *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A 25 Year Landmark Study* (New York: Hyperion) and Paul R. Amato and Alan Booth. 1997. *A Generation at Risk: Growing Up in an Era of Family Upheaval* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).

11. Four percent of respondents in our sample were from families that were neither divorced, or separated, nor intact (i.e., they were from a family in which a parent died or in which their parents did not marry). Therefore, the percentages cited in this chapter do not always add up to 100 percent.

12. Paul R. Amato and Stacy J. Rogers. 1999. "Do Attitudes Toward Divorce Affect Marital Quality?" *Journal of Family Issues* 20 (1): 69-86. See also Norval Glenn. 1991. "The Recent Trend in Marital Success in the United States." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 53 (May): 261-270.

13. Jay Dixit. 2001. "The Highly Charged Erotic Life of the Wellesley Girl: Behind the Green Ivy Doors of America's Most Elite Women's College." *Rolling Stone.* (March 15): 56.

14. *Ibid.*, 60.

Appendix A: Methodology

The research conducted for this report consisted of in-depth interviews with 62 undergraduate women on 11 college and university campuses and structured telephone interviews with a national sample of 1,000 unmarried heterosexual undergraduate women at four-year colleges and universities. The 62 women were interviewed in the Spring of 2000 and the telephone survey was conducted in the Winter of 2001.

The In-depth Interviews

The in-depth interviews were carried out by ten women affiliated with the Institute for American Values or recruited through university-based scholars affiliated with the Institute (see Appendix B). These interviewers met for a training session before the research started and participated in the development of the interview guide (Appendix C). The institutions at which the interviews were conducted were selected largely on a convenience basis, but with the view to providing some region-

Appendix Table 1

Regional Distribution (in percent) of national survey respondents and all college and university students in the United States in 1999

Census Division (Region)	National Sample	All Students in 1999
New England	5	6
Middle Atlantic	9	13
East North Central	32	17
West North Central	11	8
South Atlantic	17	16
East South Central	6	6
West South Central	8	10
Mountain	6	5
Pacific	5	18
Total	100	101

Calculated from data from U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2000*, [illegible] Table 290

Does not sum to 100 because of rounding

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al diversity and representation of both private and public colleges and universities. The institutions are Howard University, Yale University, New York University, the State University of New York at Stony Brook, Rutgers University, the University of Virginia, the University of Michigan, the University of Chicago, the University of Washington, the University of California at Berkeley, and Colby College (Maine). The interviewers recruited subjects by approaching women at various places on the campuses, including the Student Union. Prospective interviewees were offered $20 for their cooperation. Most women approached agreed to be interviewed, answered the questions readily, and seemed to enjoy the interviews. Although each interviewer was careful to cover each topic on the interview guide, all topics that came up during the interview were discussed. Each cooperating subject was given a short self-administered questionnaire containing a few of the questions that were later asked on the national survey. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed.

The interviewers also spent additional time on each campus observing and having informal conversations with students about the undergraduate social life. The resulting observations were recorded in short reports that also included overall impressions from the interviews.

The National Survey

The questionnaire for the national survey (see Appendix D) was developed by Norval Glenn after examination of most of the in-depth interview materials, after a debriefing session with several of the in-depth interviewers, and after consultation with other scholars affiliated with the Institute for American Values. The survey was conducted by the research firm of Schulman, Ronca, and Bucuvalas, Inc., with a sample of telephone numbers of college women (excluding those at two-year institutions) provided by Survey Sampling, Inc.. A replacement procedure was used whereby a roommate of each called person was accepted as a respondent if the person called was unwilling or unable to be interviewed. Respondents were screened for marital status and sexual orientation and were then asked the questions in Appendix D if they qualified for the study and agreed to be interviewed.

The list of telephone numbers used for the study was compiled from Fall 2000 student directories and is believed to have been the best available list of U.S. women college students. However, it underrepresented students on the West Coast and overrepresented those in the Midwest, and this unbalanced representation is reflected in the 1,000 respondents for the survey (see Appendix Table 1). To compensate for this unrepresentativeness, we weighted the responses by region (census division), using the data in the second column of Appendix Table 1. The weighting made little difference in most of the findings, usually changing percentages by no more than two or three points, but it made the responses moderately less traditional overall.

Comparison of National Survey Respondents and In-depth Interviewees

As can be seen from Appendix Table 2, there were some important differences between the national survey respondents and the in-depth interviewees. The largest difference is that the in-depth interviewees seemed much less clear overall about how they should act in their romantic/sexual relationships than the national survey respondents, and the former were moderately less religious and less traditional in some of their attitudes (though no less interested in marriage).

These differences can reasonably be attributed largely to the the absence of religiously sponsored institutions among those at which the in-depth interviews were conducted, though the lack of nonelite colleges and universities among the interview sites may also have made an important difference. The fact that the in-depth interviews were all conducted on the West Coast, the East Coast, and in the West North Central census division does not seem to account for much of the differences.

The implication of the differences is that attitudes and behaviors common among the in-depth interviewees may be less common among American college women as a whole. We believe, however, that they are common at the kinds of elite, nonreligious institutions at which the interviews were conducted.

Appendix Table 2
Comparison of National Sample with In-depth Interviewees

	National Sample[1]	In-depth Interviewees
Reported religiosity (in percent):		
Very religious	18	12
Fairly religious	43	28
Slightly religious	24	33
Not religious at all	15	26
Total	100	99[2]
Responses (in percent) to the agree-disagree questions		
	National Sample[1]	In-depth Interviewees
I have a clear sense of what I should do and should not do in my romantic/sexual interactions.		
Strongly agree	78	37
Somewhat agree	18	35
Somewhat disagree	4	26
Strongly disagree	0	2
Total	100	100

Responses (in percent) to the agree-disagree questions (continued)

	National Sample[4]	In-depth Interviewees
Sexual intercourse without commitment is wrong.		
Strongly agree	42	28
Somewhat agree	22	28
Somewhat disagree	27	33
Strongly disagree	9	10
Total	100	99[5]
The things I do in my relationship today will affect my future marriage.		
Strongly agree	48	26
Somewhat agree	35	49
Somewhat disagree	13	14
Strongly disagree	4	11
Total	100	100
Being married is a very important goal for me.		
Strongly agree	47	51
Somewhat agree	36	40
Somewhat disagree	12	9
Strongly disagree	6	0
Total	101[6]	100
In general I am happy with the social scene here.		
Strongly agree	12	18
Somewhat agree	76	60
Somewhat disagree	9	18
Strongly disagree	3	5
Total	100	101
There aren't many guys here who want a committed relationship.		
Strongly agree	21	18
Somewhat agree	40	40
Somewhat disagree	27	33
Strongly disagree	10	9
Don't know/refused	2	0
Total	100	100

Responses (in percent) to the agree-disagree questions (continued)

	National Sample[8]	In-depth Interviewees
My parents have more influence than my friends on how I think about relationships with men.		
Strongly agree	22	25
Somewhat agree	31	21
Somewhat disagree	31	37
Strongly disagree	16	18
Total	100	101[9]
Going out in a group, drinking a lot, and then having sex is common at my college.		
Strongly agree	8	14
Somewhat agree	32	36
Somewhat disagree	30	36
Strongly disagree	27	14
Don't know	3	0
Total	100	100
I would like to meet my future husband at college.		
Strongly agree	19	11
Somewhat agree	44	39
Somewhat disagree	24	40
Strongly disagree	12	7
Don't know	1	4
Total	100	101[10]

Notes

[1] Weighted by region.
[2] Does not sum to 100 because of rounding.
[3] Weighted by region.
[4] Weighted by region.
[5] Does not sum to 100 because of rounding.
[6] Does not sum to 100 because of rounding.
[7] Does not sum to 100 because of rounding.
[8] Weighted by region.
[9] Does not sum to 100 because of rounding.
[10] Does not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Appendix B: Courtship Research Team

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Interviewers

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Appendix C: In-depth Interview Guide

Introductory script

Instructions to interviewer in italics.

1) Are you an undergraduate? If yes,

2) Hi, my name is _____. *(If you are an alum it might help to mention it; i.e., "I'm a [COLLEGE NAME] alum.)* and I'm part of a research team headed by University of Texas Prof. Norval Glenn. We're recruiting for a landmark national study on relations between men and women in college. The interview takes about an hour, you will receive $20 for your time, plus you would give scholars very valuable insights into campus relationships, what young women think about college social life. Would you want to participate?

3) *Give them the written questionnaire, first.*

4) *When tape is set up repeat some version of above to get taped consent. Announce your name and campus to help identify tapes. USE ONLY ONE SIDE OF 90-Minute tape. Make sure your OMNIDIRECTIONAL MIKE is plugged into your MONOAURAL TAPE RECORDER, and it is placed between the two of you, and is working.*

Script

"Just to review, my name is _____. We're doing research into relations between men and women at *[name of college]*. The results are absolutely confidential; your name won't be used, in fact you don't even have to give it to us. The interview takes about an hour and we'll pay you $20 to complete the interview and this 11 question questionnaire. Is that okay with you? Do you have any questions?"

If they have questions give short, truthful answers, reiterating the general goals of the research and inviting them to think of themselves as our collaborators on this important project, such as:

Question: How will this research be used?

Answer: Well, after all the interviews around the country are completed, we'll also do a national telephone survey designed by Professor Steven Nock at the University of Virginia. Then Glenn, Nock and the rest of the team will collaborate to produce a report, which will be released to scholars and the national media. Nothing like this on this topic has been done before. Your insights would be very important. But your confidentiality would be absolutely guaranteed. In fact, we don't need to know your name, just your ideas. Would you like to help us?

Question: What's your organization?

Answer: Well, we are all from different universities and research organizations, but Norval Glenn of the University of Texas at Austin, who is one of the leading sociologists in the country, is the head of this project. The goal is a really high quality, unbiased research report that will be useful to scholars and also to anybody who wants to know about the experiences and opinions of young women like you. Is this a good time for you?

Question: Why me?

Answer: Well, I've been assigned to do six interviews at *[name college]*. One thing we are very interested in is how young women feel about the whole male-female thing on campus. You could really help us with your opinions and experiences. Are you ready?

Question: But what is it you really want to find out? What sort of questions are they? Is this a sex survey?

Answer: We'd like to know how people meet each other at [name college], how guys treat women, stuff like that. Your answers will be absolutely confidential and of course if you are uncomfortable, we're not going to force you to answer anything. But your thoughts and feelings would be very valuable to our research project. Would you help us?

If yes, launch into "How do you meet guys on this campus?"

Interview Questions

1. How Do You Meet Guys? *(Goal: Describe actual process on campus.)*
   - Tell me about the last time you met a guy?
   - Is this usually the way it happens?
   - Are you comfortable doing it this way?
   - What words do people use to describe the various kinds of relationships with guys? *(Generate a list. Be sure to probe for hook up and date).*
     - — How do you know it's a _____? (What is a (an) _____?)
     - — Have all you ever done is _____?
     - — Have you seen anyone else _____?
     - — How common is _____?
     - — Do you like _____?
     - — Tell me about one specific time, the last time.
   - Do you have a boyfriend? Do you want a boyfriend? How does somebody get a boyfriend? How do you get to be a couple?
   - Is drinking or drug use a part of social life on campus? Does this play a role in meeting guys?

2. How Do You Want To Be Treated By A Guy? *(Goal: Elicit ideal social script of dating and relationships.)*
   - How would this relationship start? What would be the next step? Have you ever been treated this way? Would this relationship lead to marriage?
   - Is there a relationship you know about that you admire? Why? Do you feel that you can have that?
   - Stems: A good boyfriend is_____. Love is _____.

3. Are There Any Rules (Dos And Don'ts) About Sex And/Or Relationships? What Are They? *(Goal: Probe gender relations.)*
   - Are there different rules for men and women? What are they?
   - Do you think this is fair? (If not) which way would you like it to change, men more like women or women more like men?
   - What happens to people who break the rules? Do they get labeled? What are the labels? *(Generate labels. Probe for men/women differences if not mentioned).*
   - Imagine that a miracle happens; you wake up and you can change the campus social life to be whatever you want it to be. How would it be different?

4. What Do You Want Your Life To Be Like In 10 Years? *(Goal: Discover how marriage and children relate to sex, intimacy, and romance.)*
   - What about relationships?
   - What about marriage? Do you want to get married? WHY?
     - — How do you think it will happen?
     - — Do you expect to be married for life?
   - Do you want children? Why or why not? What about getting married before you have children — do you think it's important or not?
   - Stems: A good husband is _____. A good wife is _____.
   - You told us about your life in 10 years. How is your life now connected to that?

5. Where Have You Gotten Your Ideas About Guys And Relationships? *(Goal: Influences from adults and wider society. Are they on their own or is there guidance?)*
   - Whose advice have you taken in the past about guys? Do any adults talk to you about this stuff? *(Probe: parents, religious leaders, family members)*
   - What about movies, TV, music, books, magazines? Have any of these helped you form your picture about what relationships are or should be like?

6. Closure
   - Is college social life different from what you expected it to be?
   - After you graduate, do you expect it to change?
   - If your little sister were coming to this campus, what advice would you give her?
   - Sum up: What's your overall impression of social life on campus?

Appendix D: National Survey Questionnaire

(Instructions to interviewer are in parentheses.)

Display designated respondent name. Display designated respondent college.

Hello, may I speak to . . . *(Insert name from sample. Ask by respondents' first name).*

(If designated respondent is not available, ask to speak to roommate. If speaking to anyone other than designated respondent, confirm they are female and attend the college listed above.)

Hello, my name is _____ from SRBI, I am working on a research project directed by Professor Norval Glenn of the University of Texas at Austin. The interview will take no more than about 15 minutes depending on your answers. Your answers to the questions will be kept anonymous and confidential. *(If respondent wants to verify: (512) 232-6320 Professor Norval Glenn).*

The purpose of the project is to study how unmarried, heterosexual college and university women relate to men, especially to the men enrolled at their institutions.

Let me ask you, are you unmarried, heterosexual and enrolled as an undergraduate student in college?

1) Yes *(Skip to B)* 2) No

A) *(If no)* ASK: May I know why? *(Record only if offered.)*
1) Married
2) Not heterosexual
3) Not enrolled in a college or university
4) Not an undergraduate student
5) *(VOL)* Not offered

A1) May I please speak to your roommate?
1) Roommate coming to phone *(Restart from introduction)*
2) Roommate not available *(Schedule callback)*
3) No one else eligible *(Thank and Terminate S/O A1 Ineligible respondent)*
4) REFUSED *(Thank and Terminate S/O A1 Ineligible respondent)*
5) Continue Callback *(Re-start from introduction)*

B) *(If yes)*: Great, now, I would like to ask you a few questions about your relationships with men, about your life in general, and about the relationships of other women you know at your college or university.
1) Continue interview 2) Schedule callback
9) Refusal to participate *(Thank and term refusal Q.B.)*

55. First, what class are you in? freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate student?
1) Freshman 2) Sophomore

(continued)

Question 55 (continued)

3) Junior 4) Senior
5) Graduate Student *(Thank and terminate - S/O Q.5 Grad Student)*
9) Refused *(Thank and terminate - S/O Q.55)*

Now, I have just a couple of questions about how you feel about your life in general.

1. Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days — would you say you're very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?
   1) Very happy 2) Pretty Happy
   3) Not too happy 8) *(VOL)* Don't Know
   9) *(VOL)* Refused

2. How satisfied are you with your life as a whole? Would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?
   1) Very satisfied 2) Somewhat satisfied
   3) Somewhat dissatisfied 4) Very dissatisfied
   8) *(VOL)* Don't Know 9) *(VOL)* Refused

[CATI programming: randomly select Block 3-19 or 20-32, shuffle within each block]. Now, I am going to read a list of statements about college social life. After I read each statement, please tell me if you strongly agree with it, somewhat agree with it, somewhat disagree with it, or strongly disagree with it. *[Always start with 3 & 4, then rotate 5-19 randomly]*.

1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Somewhat Agree 3 - Somewhat Disagree
4 - Strongly Disagree 8 - *(VOL)* Don't Know 9 - *(VOL)* Refused

3. Men at my college generally treat women with respect.
4. When it comes to social life on campus, men have a better deal than women.
5. In general, I am happy with the social scene here.
6. There aren't many guys here who want a committed relationship.
7. It is hard to meet the right kind of guys at my college.
8. I don't find many men at my college who are attractive as potential partners.
9. I have a clear sense of what I should do and not do in my romantic/sexual interactions.
10. I don't expect a lot from the guys I go out with.
11. At my college there are clearly understood informal rules about relationships.
12. My parents have more influence than my friends on how I think about relationships with men.
13. At my college women who have traditional ideas about femininity are looked down upon.
14. I was raised with firm expectations about relationships with guys.
15. Coed dorms are a good idea.
16. On my campus a lot of couples hold hands.
17. Most of my relationships don't seem to work out.
18. Social life on my campus involves a lot of drinking.
19. Drinking makes it easier to relate to guys.

Now I am going to read you a list of statements dealing with relationships. After I read each statement, please tell me if you strongly agree with it, somewhat agree with it, somewhat

disagree with it, or strongly disagree with it. *(Always start with 20 and 21, then rotate 22-32 randomly.)*

1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Somewhat Agree 3 - Somewhat Disagree
4 - Strongly Disagree 8 - *(VOL)* Don't Know 9 - *(VOL)* Refused

20. I have a clear sense of what I should do and not do in my romantic/sexual interactions.
21. At my college going out in a group, drinking a lot, and then having sex is common.
22. Sexual intercourse without commitment is wrong.
23. I would personally consider having a child out-of-wedlock.
24. Men who have sex with women should at least call them the next day.
25. I wish women were freer to have sex with as many partners as they wanted.
26. My parents have told me I should save sex for marriage.
27. You can't have a boyfriend unless you are willing to have sex.
28. When it comes to sex, there is no right or wrong.
29. I should not judge anyone's sexual conduct except my own.
30. I wish the guys I know would be more interested in me as a person and less as a sex object.
31. One quote "has sex" unquote only if one has sexual intercourse.
32. Sometimes it is easier to have sex with a guy than to talk to him.

Just a few more questions about your social life.

33. How many dates have you had since coming to college, and by a date I mean when the guy asked you, picked you up and paid for the date. Would you say no dates, one or two, three to six or more than six?

1) None 2) One or two
3) Three to six 4) More than six
8) *(VOL)* Don't Know 9) *(VOL)* Refused

34. Do you have a boyfriend? *(If No, dk, or ref 34=2,8,9)*

1) Yes *(Skip to Q.35)* 2) No
8) *(VOL)* Don't Know 9) (VOL) Refused

34a. Have you ever had a boyfriend since coming to college?

1) Yes 2) No
8) *(VOL)* Don't Know 9) *(VOL)* Refused

35. Have you ever had sexual intercourse? *(If Yes 35=1)*

1) Yes 2) No *(Skip to Q.36)*
8) *(VOL)* Don't Know *(Skip to Q.36)*
9) *(VOL)* Refused *(Skip to Q.36)*

36. Have you had sexual intercourse *(If no, dk, or ref 35a=2,8,9)*
a. In the past month?

1) Yes *(Skip to Q.36)* 2) No
8) *(VOL)* Don't Know 9) *(VOL)* Refused *(continued)*

Question 36 (continued)

b. This semester or quarter?

1)	Yes	2)	No
8)	*(VOL)* Don't Know	9)	*(VOL)* Refused

Now, some people say that a quote "hook up" unquote is when a girl and a guy get together for a physical encounter and don't necessarily expect anything further.

37. Is that term "hook up," the way I just defined it, commonly used at your school?

1)	Yes	2)	No
8)	*(VOL)* Don't Know	9)	*(VOL)* Refused

38. How often do you think what I have defined as a hook up happens at your school, would you say, very often, fairly often, or rarely?

1)	Very often	2)	Fairly often
3)	Rarely	8)	*(VOL)* Don't Know
9)	*(VOL)* Refused		

39. Since you've been in school have you experienced a hook up? *(If yes 39=1)*

1)	Yes	2)	No *(Skip to Q.40)*
8)	*(VOL)* Don't Know *(Skip to Q.40)*		
9)	*(VOL)* Refused *(Skip to Q.40)*		

39a. How many times have you hooked up? Would you say once or twice, 3 to 6 times or more than 6 times?

1)	Once or twice	2)	Three to six times
3)	More than six times	8)	*(VOL)* Don't Know
9)	*(VOL)* Refused		

39b. And, which of the following describes how you felt a day or so after you hooked up? *[Order items 1-8 randomly].*

		1 Yes	2 No	8 D/K	9 REF
1)	Triumphant	1	2		
2)	Desirable	1	2		
3)	Awkward	1	2		
4)	Disappointed	1	2		
5)	Adventuresome	1	2		
6)	Empty	1	2		
7)	Confused	1	2		
8)	Exploited	1	2		
9)	Anything else? Other, specify: And that was..._____				

40. And now, in your opinion, which of the following behaviors should a girl expect from a guy she would call her boyfriend? Select as many as apply. *[Order items randomly.]*

(continued)

Question 40 (continued)

		1 Yes	2 No	8 DK	9 REF
1)	Be sexually faithful to her	1	2		
2)	Introduce her as his girlfriend	1	2		
3)	Send her flowers on special occasions	1	2		
4)	Continue to see her even if she didn't want to have sexual intercourse	1	2		
5)	Take care of her when she is sick	1	2		
6)	Carry heavy things for her	1	2		
7)	Hold her hand in public	1	2		
8)	Tell her he loves her	1	2		
9)	Call her pet names	1	2		
10)	Introduce her to his family	1	2		

Now, we're going back to a few more statements with the strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree format. These statements are about marriage, men and your future. *[Order items 40-53 randomly].*

1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Somewhat Agree 3 - Somewhat Disagree
4 - Strongly Disagree 8 - *(VOL)* Don't Know 9 - *(VOL)* Refused

40. Being married is a very important goal for me.
41. I would like to meet my future husband at college.
42. The things I do in my relationship today will affect my future marriage.
43. I believe that when the time is right I will find the right person to marry.
44. After I leave college it will be easier to meet the right kind of guys.
45. At this time in my life, I am not ready to be serious about romantic relationships.
46. It is unwise for a woman to rely on marriage for financial security.
47. I am very optimistic and confident about my future.
48. It is a good idea to live with someone before deciding to marry him.
49. When I look ahead five or ten years, it is hard to see how marriage fits in with my other plans.
50. Men are not to be trusted.
51. If I marry I want my marriage to last for life.
52. If I marry I expect my marriage to last for life.
53. There is someone in my family whose marriage I really admire.

Now I want to ask you a few questions about yourself.

54. How old are you?

1)	17 or younger	2)	18	3)	19
4)	20	5)	21	6)	22
7)	23	8)	24 or older	9)	(VOL) Refused

[Question 55 will still appear here in the data even though it is asked first.]

56. Do you live on or off campus?

1) on campus 2) off campus
8) *(VOL)* Don't Know 9) *(VOL)* Refused

57. Are your parents still married and living together? *(If no - 57=2)*

1) Yes *(Skip to Q.58)*
2) No
8) *(VOL)* Don't Know *(Skip to Q.58)*
9) *(VOL)* Refused *(Skip to Q.58)*

57a. How come they're not living together? Are they divorced, separated, or what? *(If divorced 57a = 1)*

1) Divorced
2) Separated
3) *(VOL)* One or both deceased
4) *(VOL)* Temporarily living apart because of job, etc.
5) *(VOL)* Other *(Specify)*
8) *(VOL)* Don't Know
9) *(VOL)* Refused

57b. Has either of your parents been divorced more than once?

1) Yes 2) No
8) *(VOL)* Don't Know 9) *(VOL)* Refused

58. What is your race? Is it White, Black, African American, or something else?

1) White 2) African American/Black
3) Asian or Pacific Islander
4) American Indian/Native American
5) Some other race (Specify)_____
8) (DK) 9) (Refused)

59. And, If you consider your ethnicity to be different from your race, what is it?

1) Not different
2) Different (Record stated ethnicity:_____)
8) *(VOL)* Don't Know
9) *(VOL)* Refused

60. What is your religious preference — are you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Muslim or some other religion, or don't you have a religious preference?

1) Protestant 2) Roman Catholic
3) Jewish 4) Muslim/Islam
5) Mormon 6) Orthodox Church (Greek, Russian, etc.)
7) Other religion (Specify)_____
8) No preference/Atheist/Agnostic
9) Don't know/refused

60a. If Protestant *(Q.60=1)*: What specific denomination is that? *(DO NOT READ LIST)*

1) African Methodist Episcopal (AME) *(continued)*

Question 60a. (continued)

2) African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ)
3) Assemblies of God
4) Baptist
5) Brethren
6) Charismatic
7) "Christian" or "Just Christian"
8) Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA)
9) Christian Science
10) Church(es) of Christ
11) Church of God
12) Church of the Nazarene
13) Congregationalist
14) Disciples of Christ
15) Episcopalian (or Anglican/Church of England)
16) Evangelical Covenant Church
17) Evangelical Free Church
18) Four Square Gospel
19) Free Methodist Church
20) Holiness
21) Independent
22) Jehovah's Witness
23) "Just Protestant"
24) Lutheran
25) Mennonite
26) Methodist
27) Mormon/Latter Day Saints
28) Nondenominational or Interdenominational Protestant
29) Pentecostal
30) Presbyterian
31) Quaker/Friends
32) Reformed
33) Salvation Army
34) Unitarian-Universalist
35) United Church of Christ (UCC)
36) Wesleyan Church
37) Other (specify: _____)
49) Don't know/refused

61. How religious do you consider yourself to be, very religious, fairly religious, slightly religious, or not religious at all?

1)	Very	2)	Fairly
3)	Slightly	4)	Not at all
8)	*(VOL)* Don't Know	9)	*(VOL)* Refused

62. How often do you attend religious services, would you say never or almost never, occasionally but less than once per month, one to three times per month, or almost every week?

(continued)

Question 62 (continued)

1) Never or almost never
2) Occasionally but less than once per month
3) One to three times per month
4) Almost every week
8) *(VOL)* Don't Know
9) *(VOL)* Refused

63. What level of education did your mom complete? *[DO NOT READ LIST]*

1) Less than high school graduation
2) High school graduation but no college
3) Some college but no bachelor's degree
4) Trade or Vocational School
5) Associate's Degree
6) Bachelor's degree
7) Master's or Doctorate
8 *(VOL)* Don't Know
9) *(VOL)* Refused

64. And how about your dad? What level of education did he complete? *[DO NOT READ LIST]*

1) Less than high school graduation
2) High school graduation but no college
3) Some college but no bachelor's degree
4) Trade or Vocational School
5) Associate's degree
6) Bachelor's degree
7) Master's or Doctorate
8) *(VOL)* Don't Know
9) *(VOL)* Refused

65. And the name of the school you attend is... *[Read in school. Type response in carefully).*

1) School is Correct
2) Update School Name_____

66. In what state is it located? *(CATI PROGRAMMING: Insert state pre-codes.)*

Thank you very much for your cooperation. I really appreciate the time you've taken to do this. You've been very helpful!

About the Photographs

The photographs in this report are by Raina Sacks Blankenhorn, a photographer and writer living in New York City with her husband and their three children. Her photographs of New York's Central Park appeared in a 1998 Institute report, *A Call to Civil Society*.

The image on the cover, "Cheetah" (1981), iconographically suggests a series of antinomies — a young woman who is exposed yet guarded, sexually direct yet secretive, open to connectedness yet isolated — that seems to echo some of the ideas and themes of this report. The photograph of the couple dancing, "La Balance" (1981), conveys an elegant ideal of male-female courtship, while at the same time, the couple is slightly off balance. The image of the couple kissing, "A Couple" (1983), shows that the two have become one, true lovers and soul mates.

About the Institute for American Values

The Institute for American Values, founded in 1987, is a private, nonpartisan organization devoted to contributing intellectually to the renewal of marriage and family life and the sources of competence, character, and citizenship.

By providing forums for scholarly inquiry and debate, the Institute seeks to bring fresh knowledge to bear on the challenges facing families and civil society. Through its research, publications, and educational activities, the Institute seeks to bridge the gap between scholarship and policy making, bringing new information and analyses to the attention of policy makers in government, opinion makers in the media, and decision makers in the private sector.

The Institute's president is David Blankenhorn. The Chair of its Board of Directors is Professor Jean Bethke Elshtain of the University of Chicago. The Institute's Council on Families, its Council on Civil Society, its Mothers' Council, and its academic and professional advisory committees bring together more than 100 of the nation's most distinguished scholars and analysts from across the human sciences and from across the political spectrum.

About the Independent Women's Forum

Established in 1992, the Independent Women's Forum (IWF) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to research and public education on policy issues concerning women. Through its projects, programs, and publications, the Independent Women's Forum provides a voice for American women who believe in individual freedom, economic opportunity, and personal responsibility. The Independent Women's Forum's philosophy encourages decision-making based on facts, common sense, and consideration of what is best for society as a whole.

The IWF Campus Project responds to the needs of young women and men who want to build a more positive culture of truth, respect, and responsibility in society. The Campus Project sponsors a webzine, *www.SheThinks.org*, featuring articles, news, message boards, and reader feedback on subjects ranging from dating and sex to academia and politics. IWF also assists students in launching grassroots activities on their campuses, including publications, events, debates, and new independent student organizations.

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